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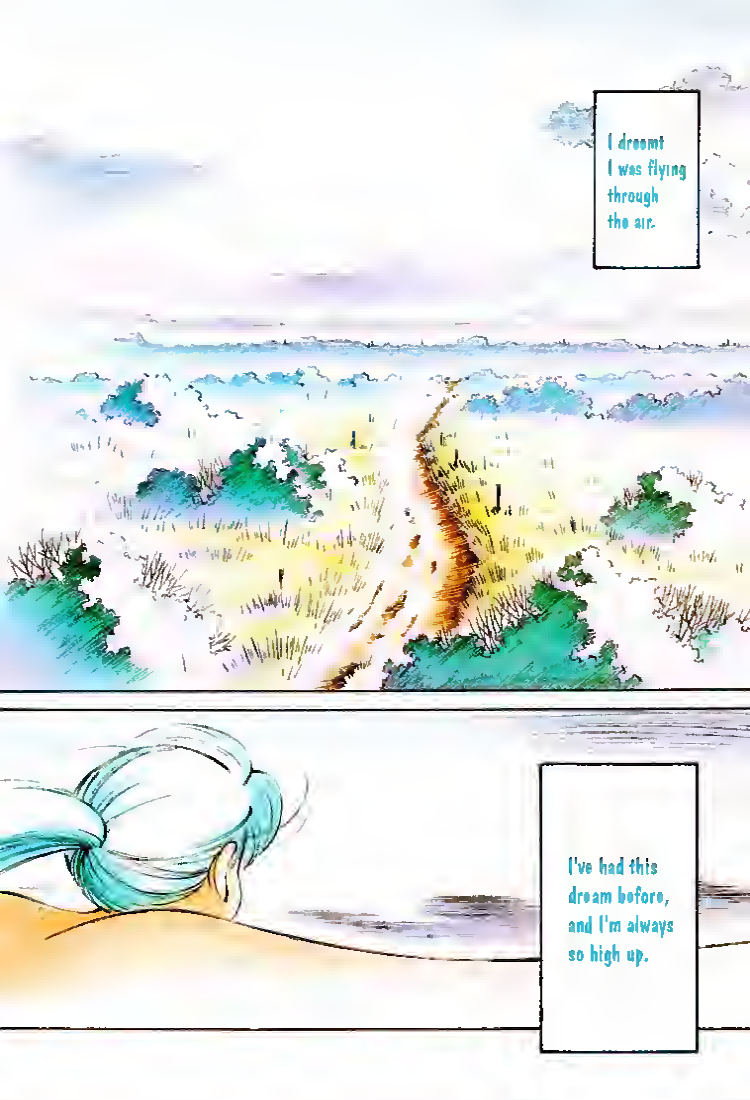
Story 55 White Sky


I dreamt I was flying through the air.
I've had this dream before, and I'm always so high up.

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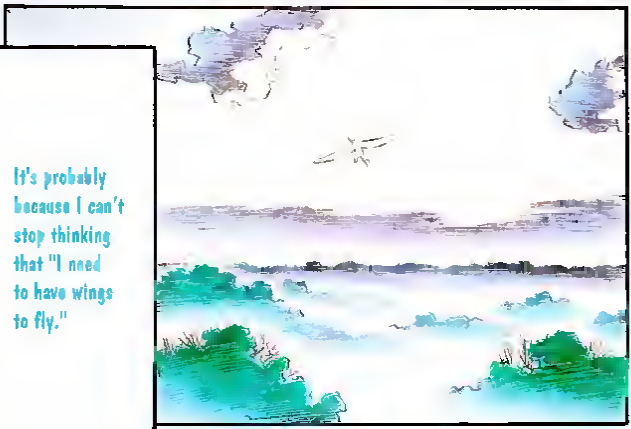
I don't know why, but my arms have become wings.

I don't know if there's any great meaning to these wings when I'm flying in this dream, but...



It's probably because I can't stop thinking that "I need to have wings to fly."

The sky is so quiet, with only a gentle breeze.

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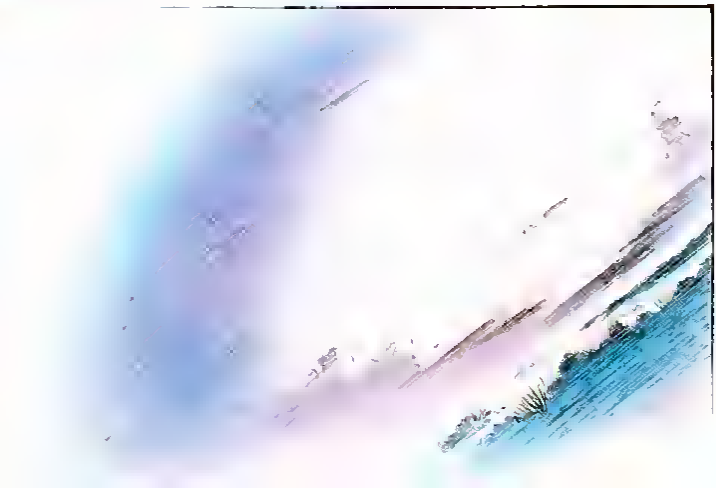
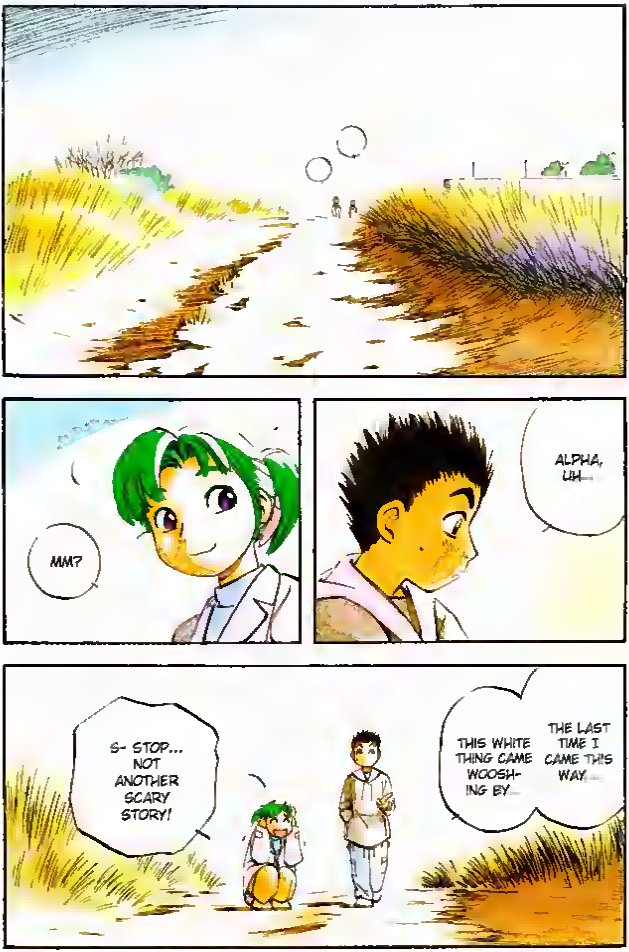
It's Takahiro.
He sees me, doesn't he?



!
YAWN .....


MM?
ALPHA, UH...
S- STOP... NOT ANOTHER SCARY STORY!
THIS WHITE THING CAME WOOSH-ING BY...
THE LAST TIME I CAME THIS WAY...

Story 56 White Morning

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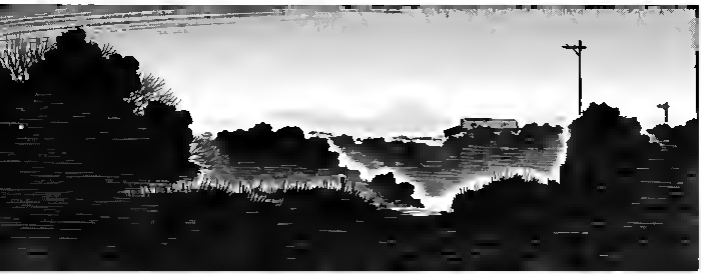
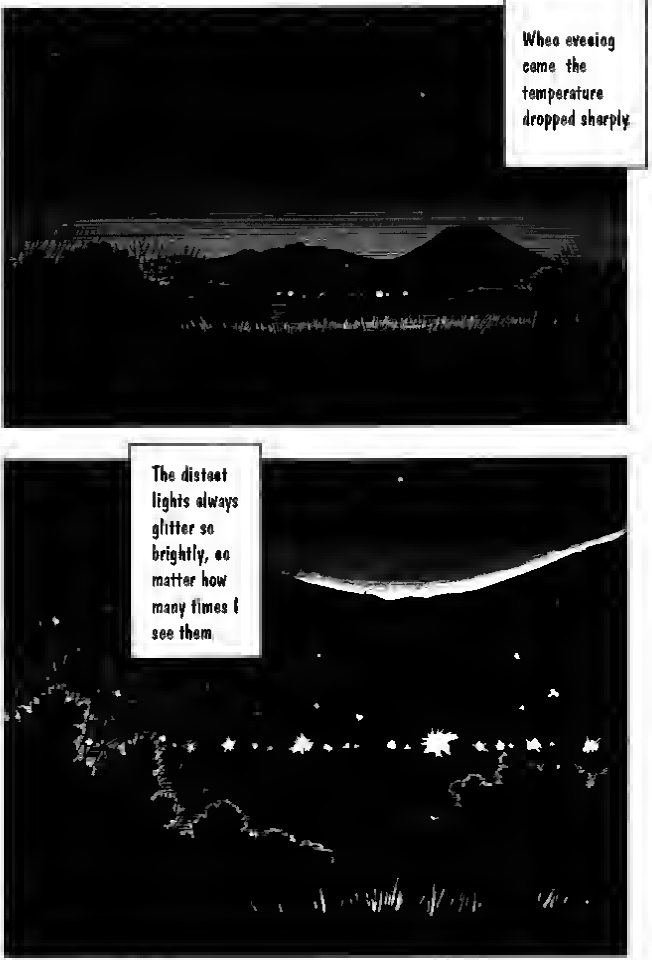
At this time, it is a gloriously clear day.
Every time the town party inevitably fails to end, I take refuge at Alphe's place.
The sky was such a deep dark shade of blue.




When evening came the temperature dropped sharply.
The distant lights always glitter so brightly, no matter how many times I see them.

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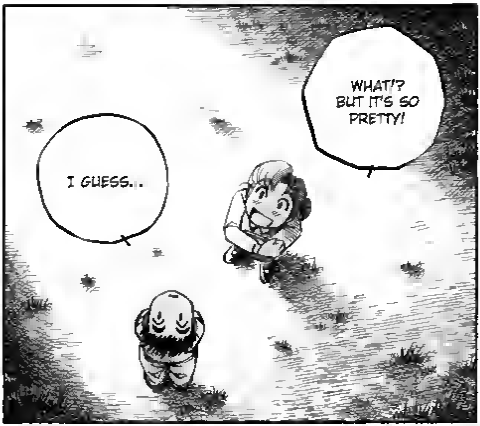
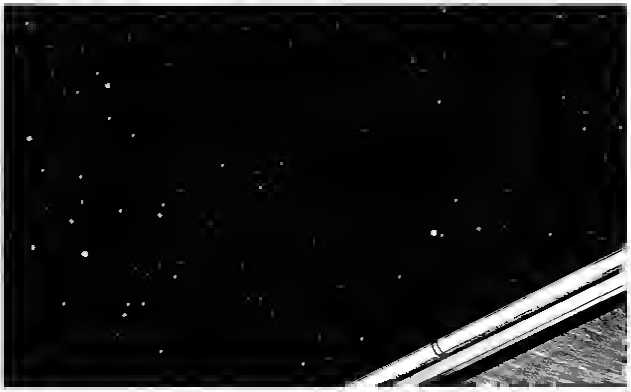
There were so many stars, scattered like dust across the sky.
ISN'T THIS AMAZING!?
NOT REALLY...

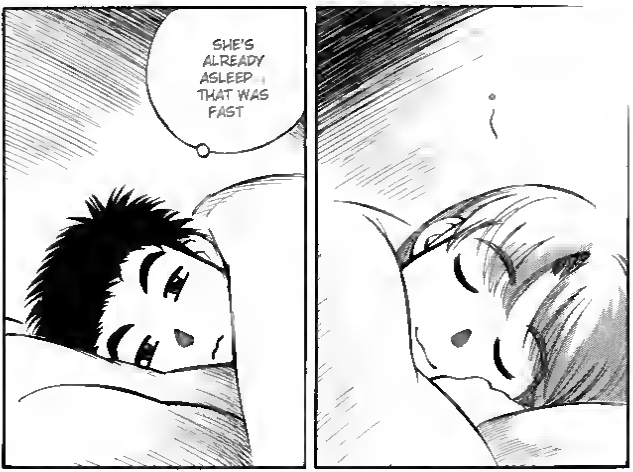
MAN IT'S COLD


I GUESS..
WHAT!? BUT IT'S SO PRETTY!

I HAVEN'T SEEN THIS USED MUCH.
MM...
I DON'T THINK THIS WORKS VERY WELL FOR MORE THAN ONE PERSON...
LET'S GET OUT THE FUTONS NOW...
SHOULD I HEAT THE BATH?
HAD ONE TODAY.



AH, IT'S NO GOOD. THE FUTON'S JUST... MAKIN' ME SLEEPY.
ME TOO. I'M ABOUT TO FALL ASLEEP NOW.
SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
...


SHE'S ALREADY ASLEEP... THAT WAS FAST

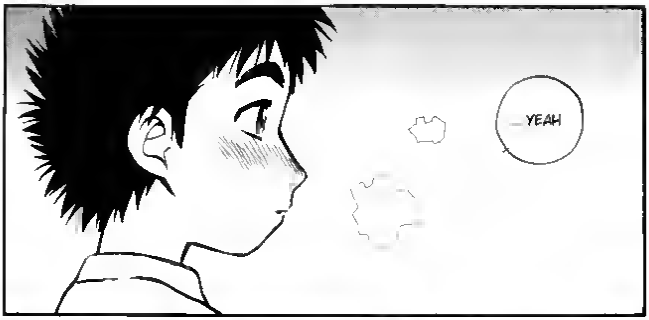
MMM...

ふぅ。
……
!
ぴくっ。
TAKAHIRO!!

AH, YOU'RE AWAKE!?
COME LOOK AT THIS!! IT'S INCRED-IBLE!!
COME ON, COME ON!!
IT'S LIKE ANOTHER WORLD!
.....
ばたばた
?
TAKAHIRO-O-OOO!!
CLICK

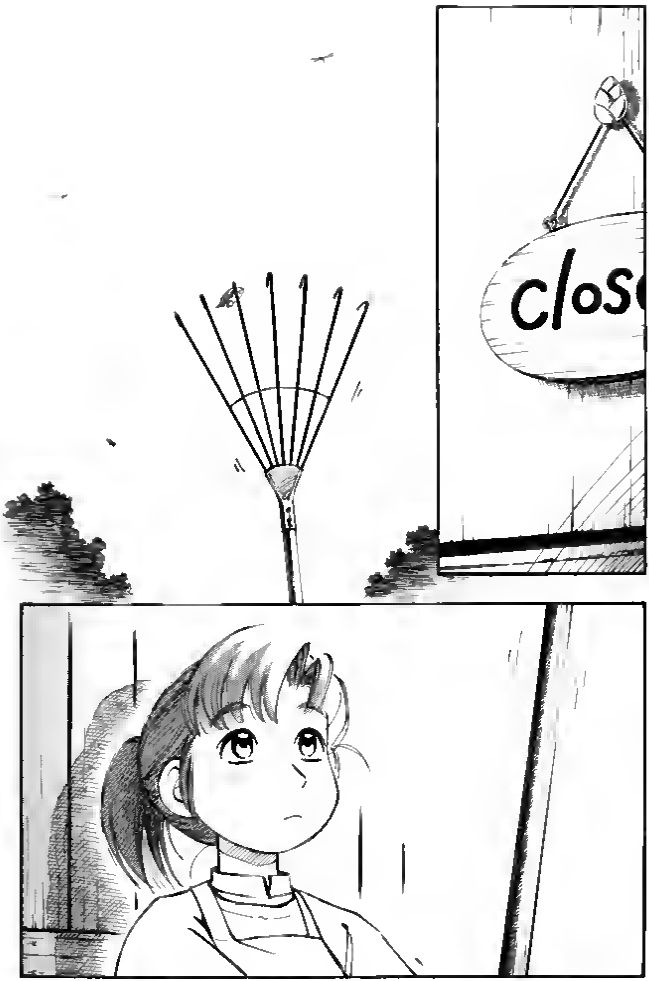
LOOK! FROST!!
IT'S ALL WHITE!!

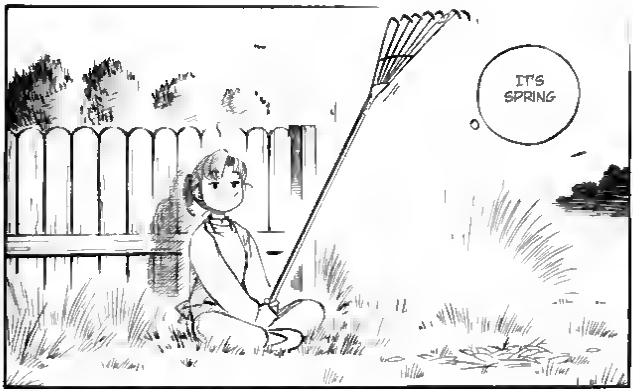
ISN'T IT GREAT?
IT'S SO PRETTY!


YEAH

A frost covered morning

Story 57 White Paint


Clos


IT'S SPRING

The sky is clear...
there's no wind...

ZZZZZ
When did this happen? Suddenly there are dragonflies and other little winged insects everywhere.

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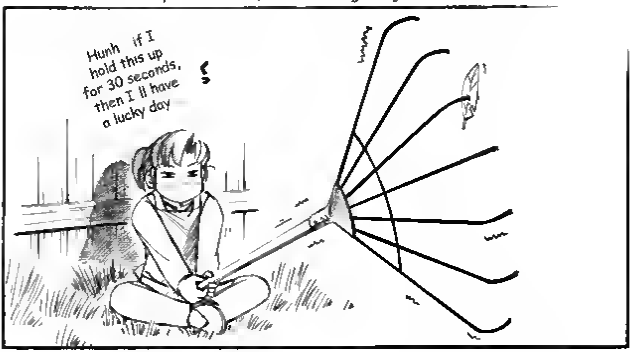

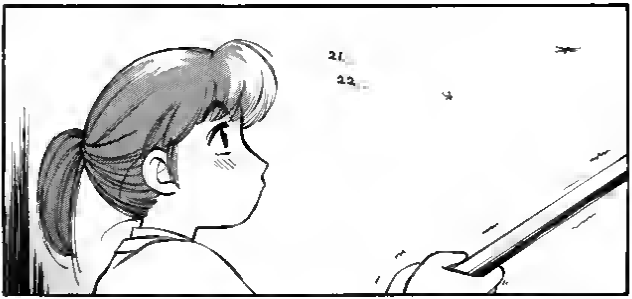

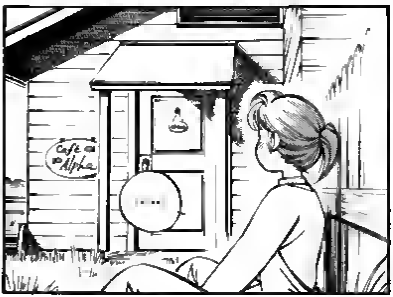

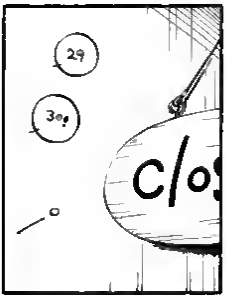

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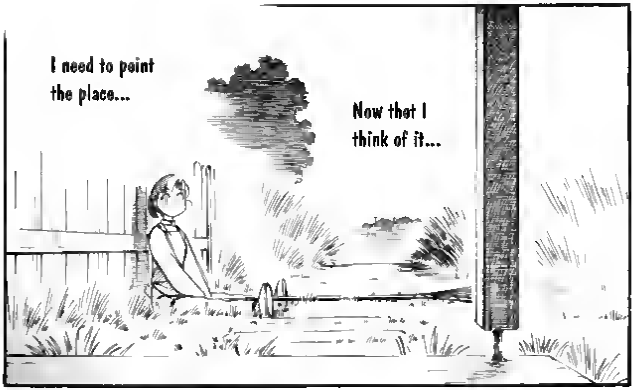
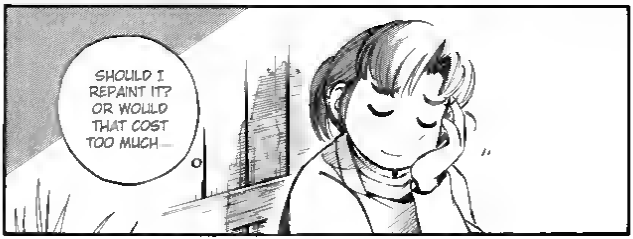
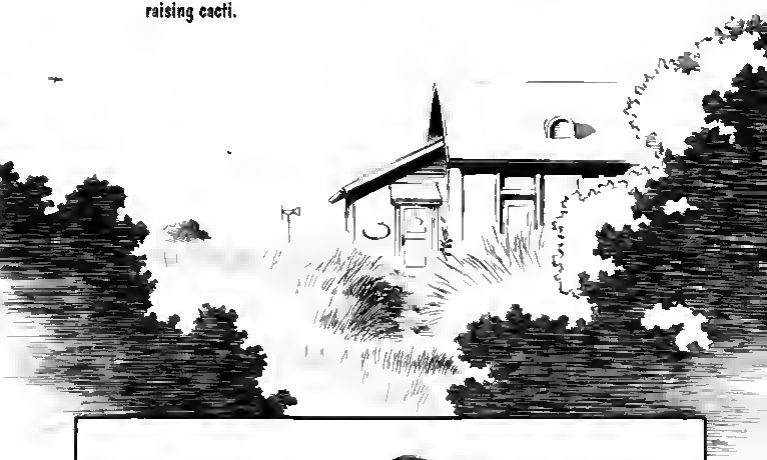




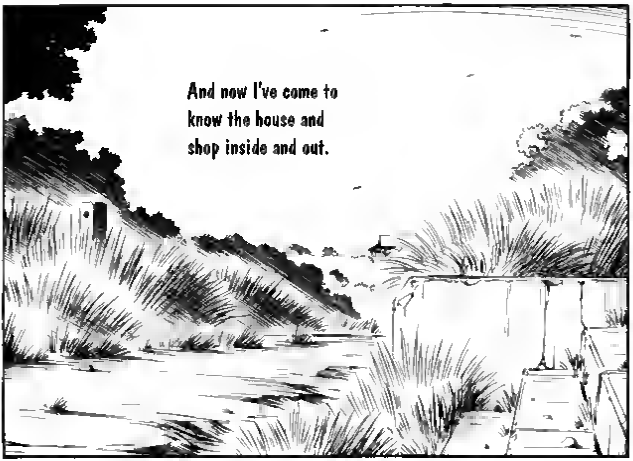
The shop was originally an addition to the house as a sunny living room.

The room came to be used more for drying clothes and raising cacti.



I was already here by that time.

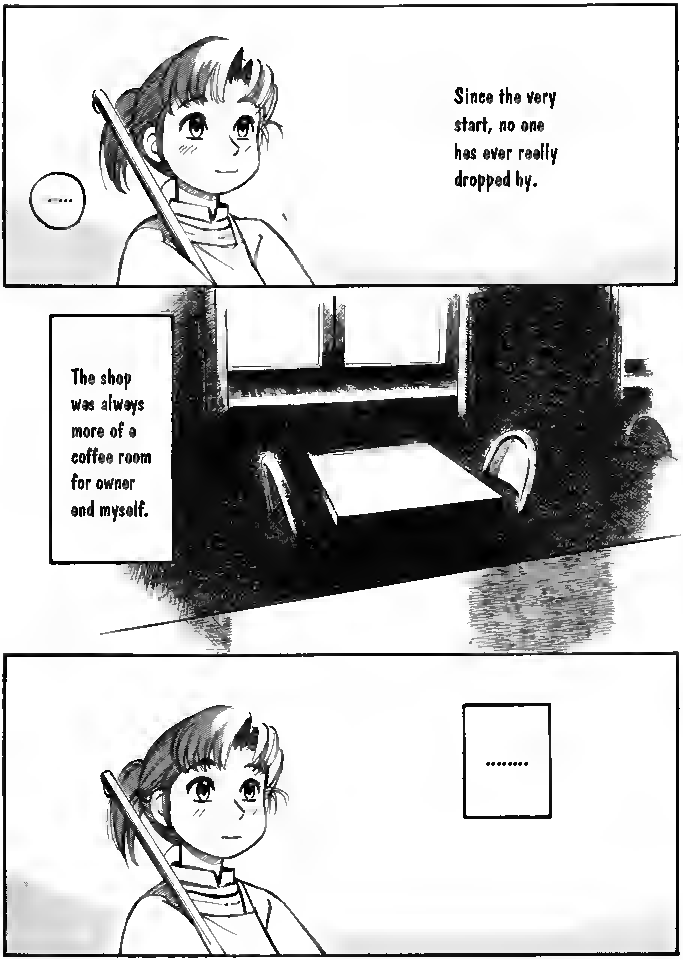
Owner told me this a long time ago.

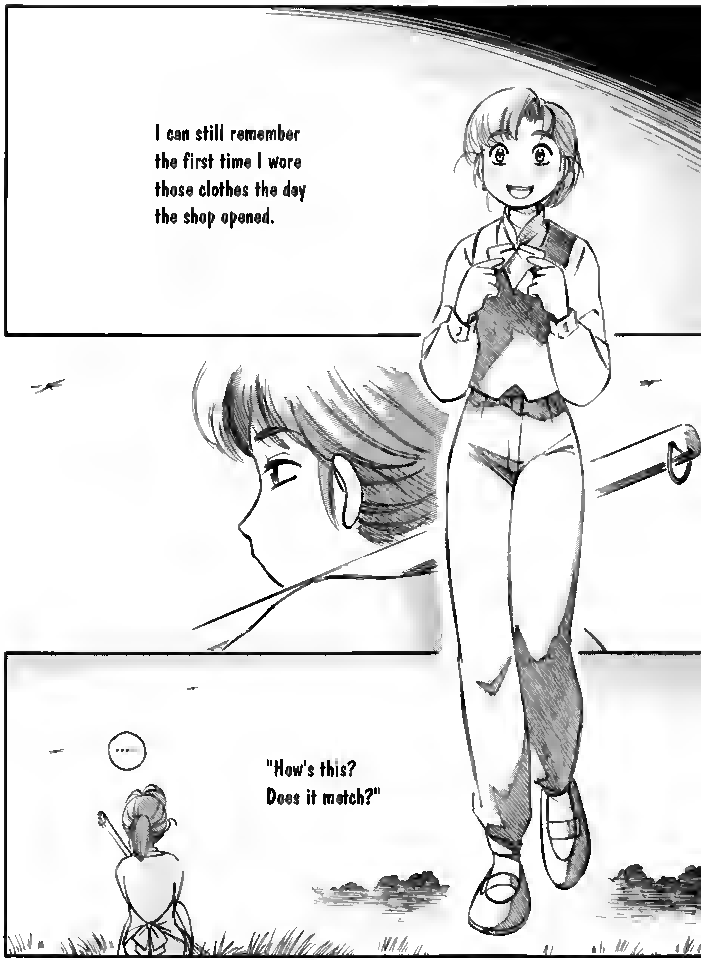

And now I've come to know the house and shop inside and out.

I WONDER HOW MUCH THAT WILL COST...
I SHOULD REALLY DO A LITTLE REMODELING THOUGH...

It's so wonderfully tattered.

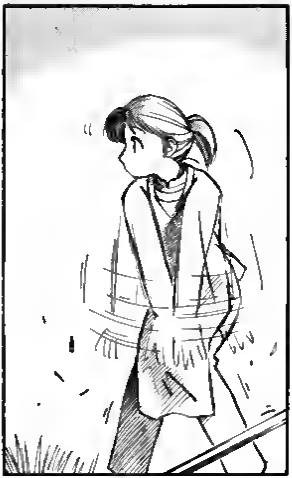
I suppose it was my idea at the time... to make the room into a sort of shop.
Owner...
probably thought it seemed like a good enough idea.
.....
Even though there were never any customers.

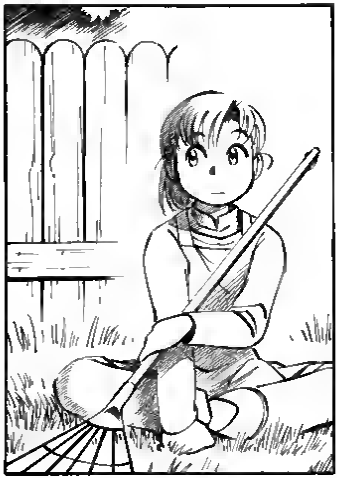

.....
Since the very start, no one has ever really dropped by.
The shop was always more of a coffee room for owner and myself.
.....

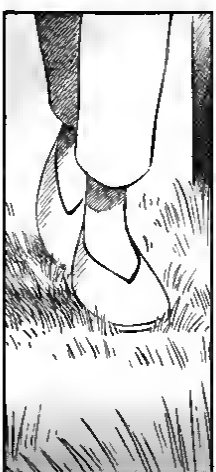

I can still remember the first time I wore those clothes the day the shop opened.
....
"How's this? Does it match?"

I don't think the shop ever closed early...
Back then, I remember being always in a rush during the day.

Owner listened to everything I said, no matter how trivial.
At night, I'd talk with owner about various things.
I cannot tell the real memories from the ones I may have imagined up later.
Things get hazy from then on.
.....

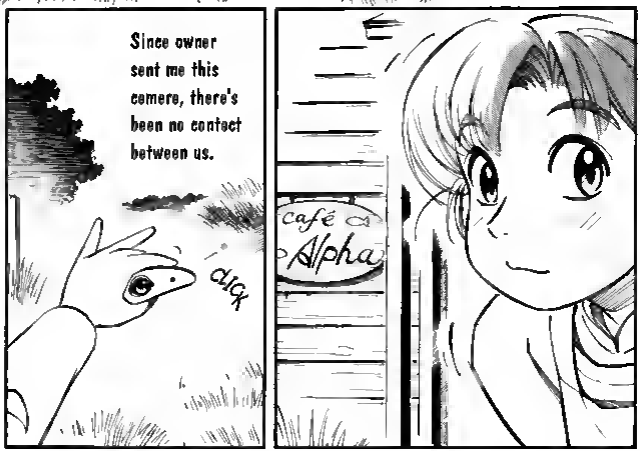


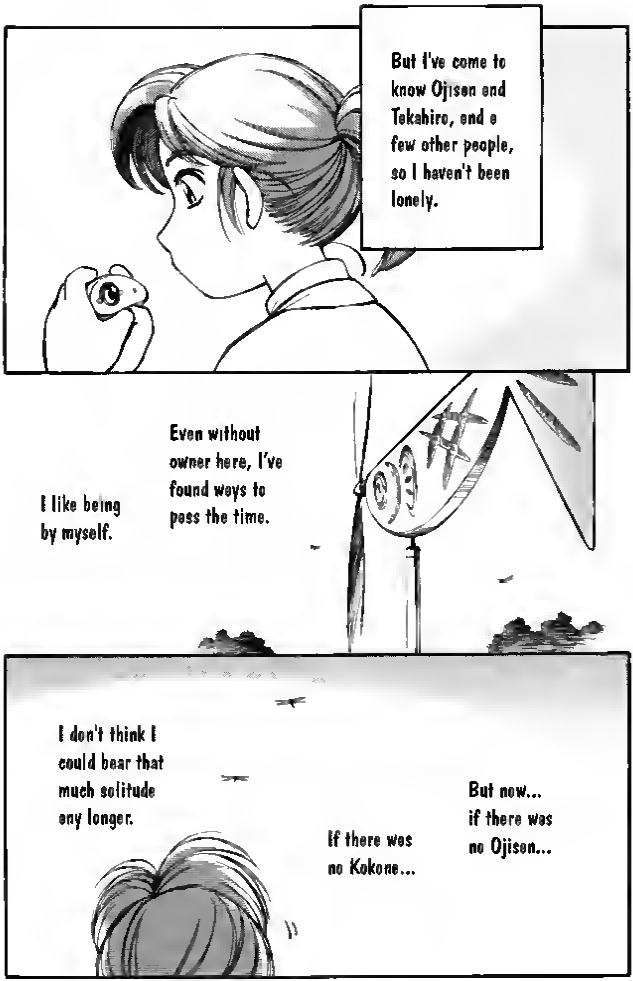


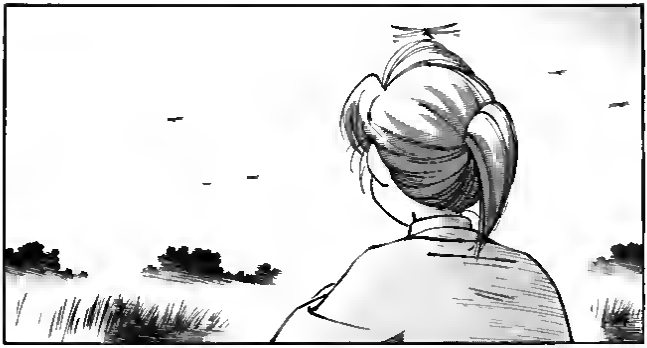


CREAK

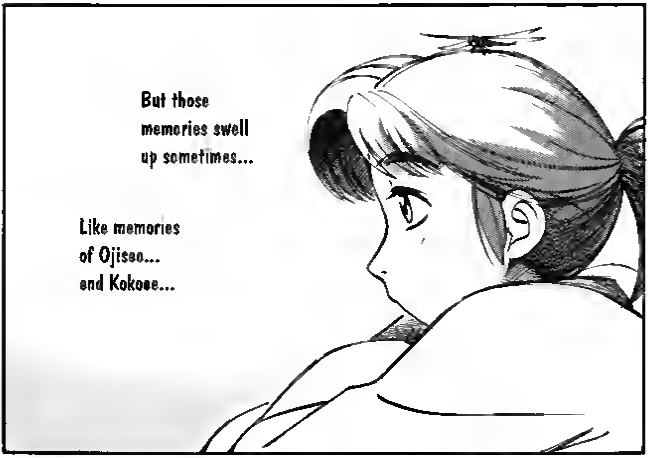
café Alpha
click

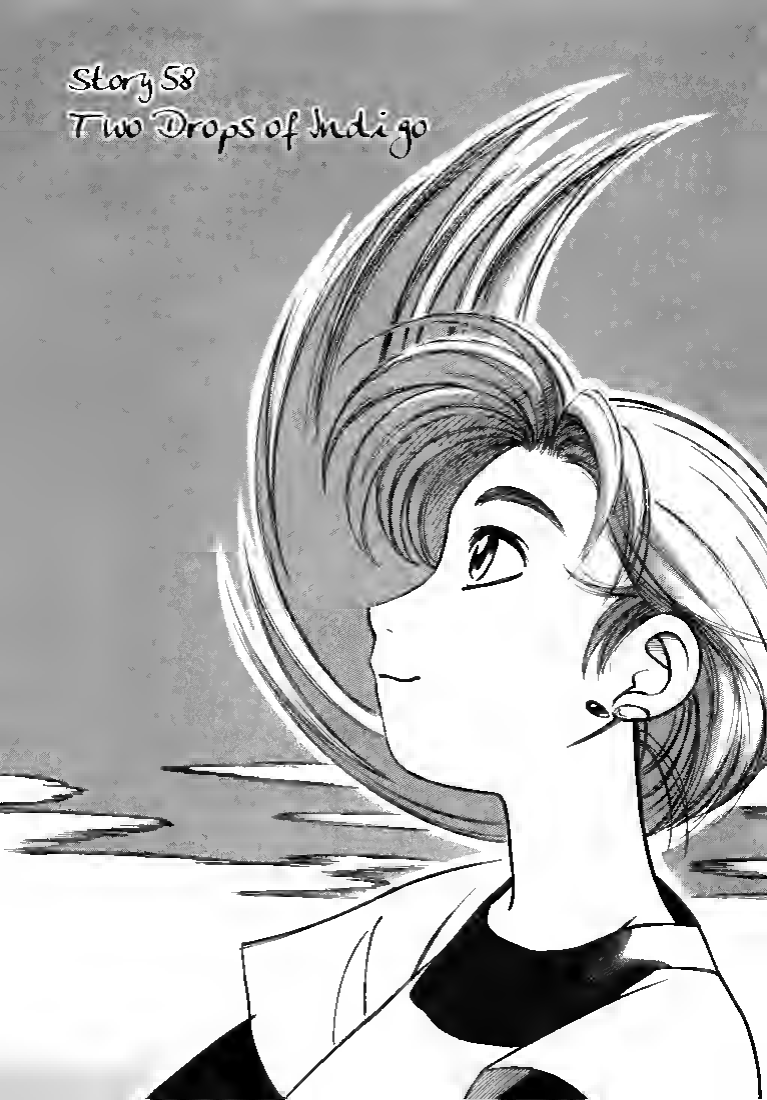

Since owner sent me this camera, there's been no contact between us.
click
café Alpha


But I've come to know Ojisan and Tokahiro, and a few other people, so I haven't been lonely.
I like being by myself.
Even without owner here, I've found ways to pass the time.
I don't think I could bear that much solitude any longer.
If there was no Kokone...
But now... if there was no Ojisan...



It's been a
long time
since I thought
about owner.




Story 58
Two Drops of Indigo

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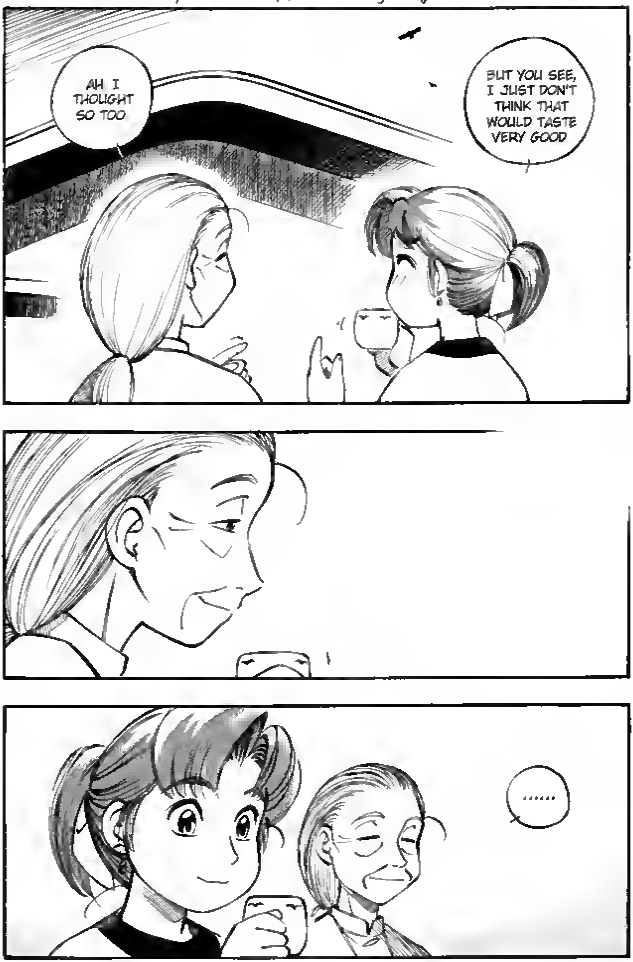
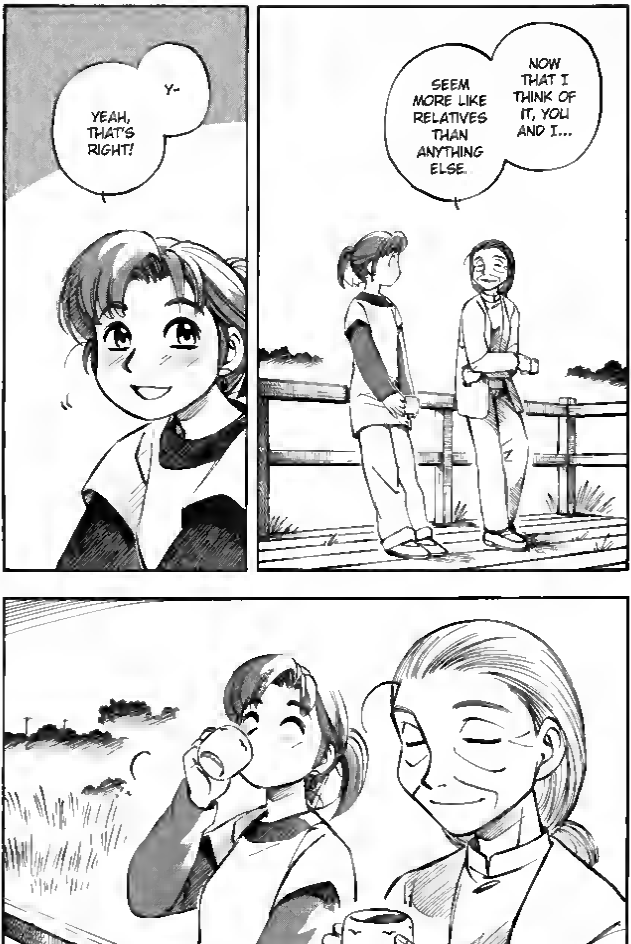
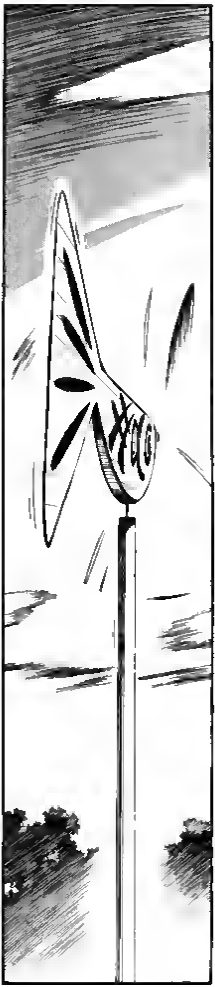
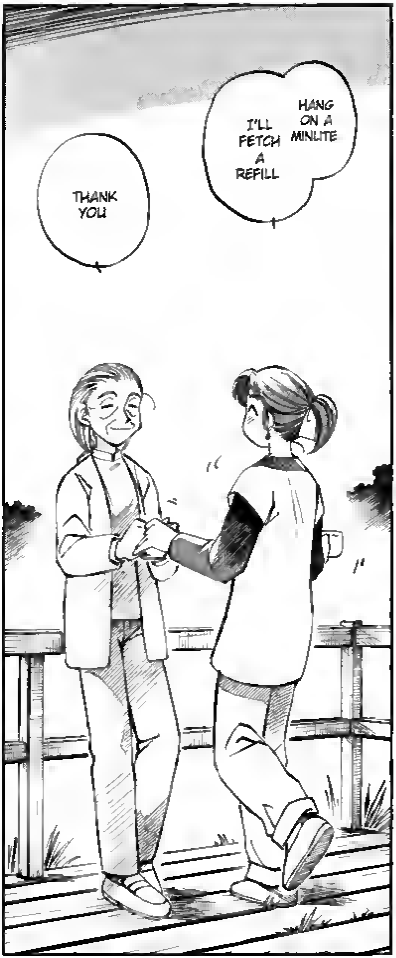


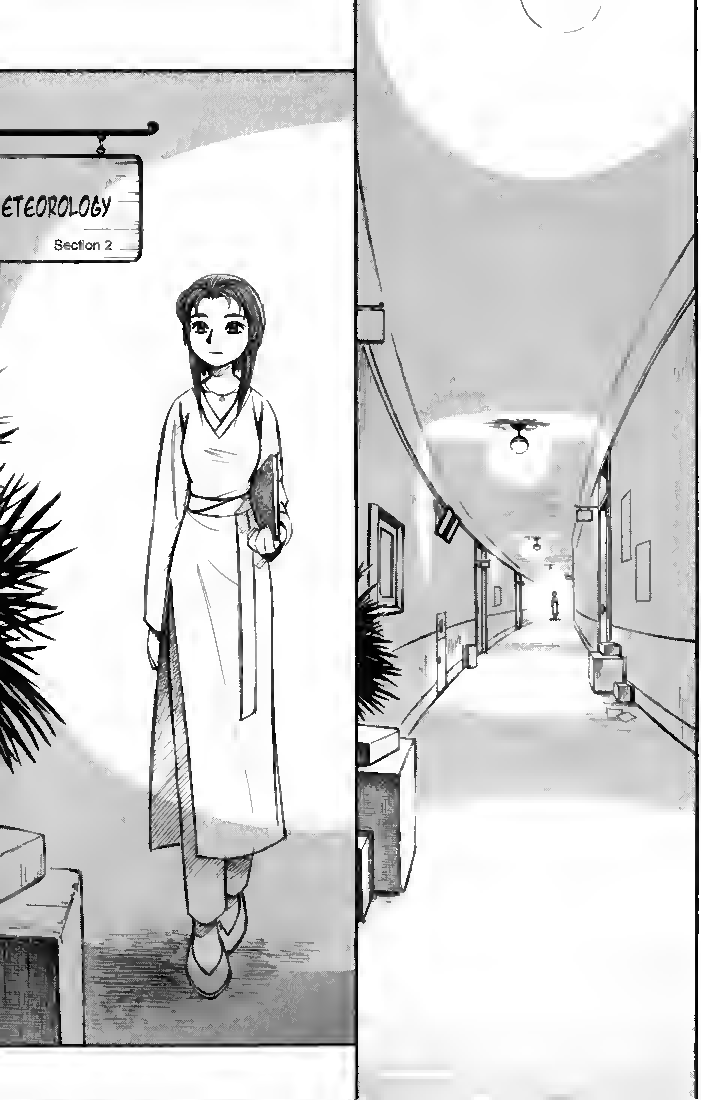
YES?
YOU KNOW...
SOMEHOW, JUST FOR A MOMENT...
IT FELT LIKE I WAS TALKING TO ONE OF MY OLD CLASSMATES.
REALLY?
IT WAS AS THOUGH I WAS IN A DREAM OF MY STUDENT DAYS ONCE AGAIN

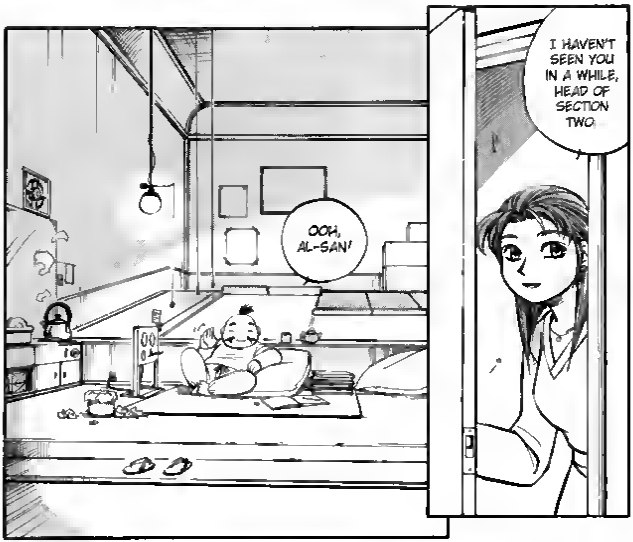
I..
DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO COMPARE IT TO, BUT...
IT FEELS...
NICE.


Y-
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT!
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, YOU AND I...
SEEM MORE LIKE RELATIVES THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

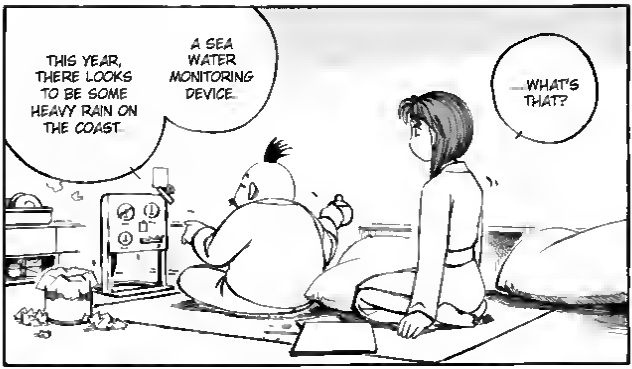


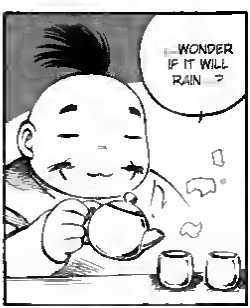

HANG ON A MINLITE
I'LL FETCH A REFILL
THANK YOU


ETEOROLOGY
Section 2

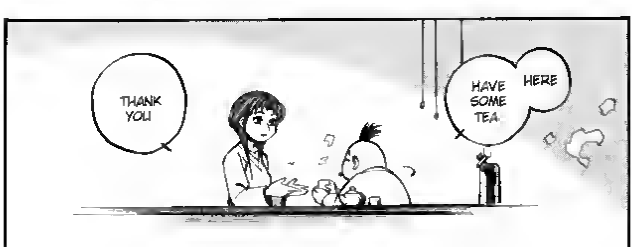

I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE, HEAD OF SECTION TWO.
OOH, AL-SAN!

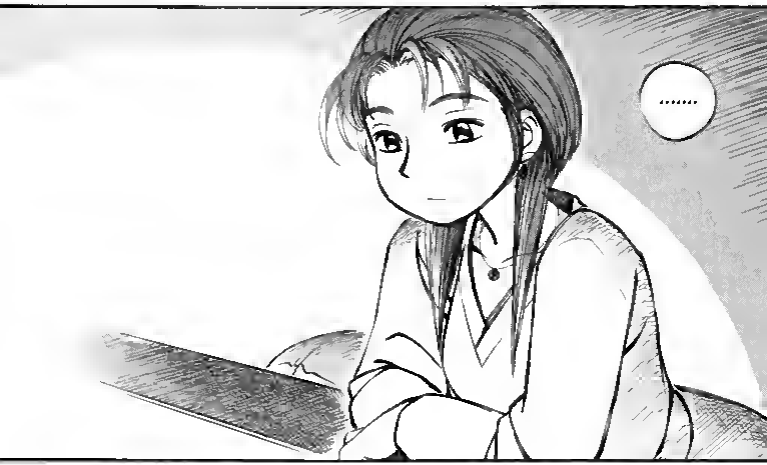
DO YOU MIND?
I'M ALWAYS GLAD FOR A VISIT!
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

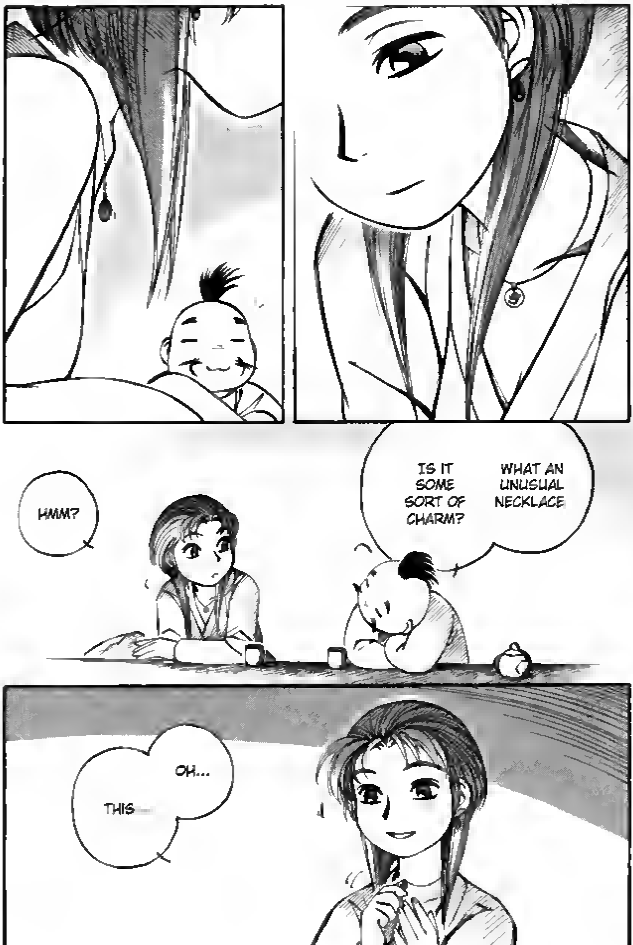

THIS YEAR, THERE LOOKS TO BE SOME HEAVY RAIN ON THE COAST.
A SEA WATER MONITORING DEVICE.
WHAT'S THAT?

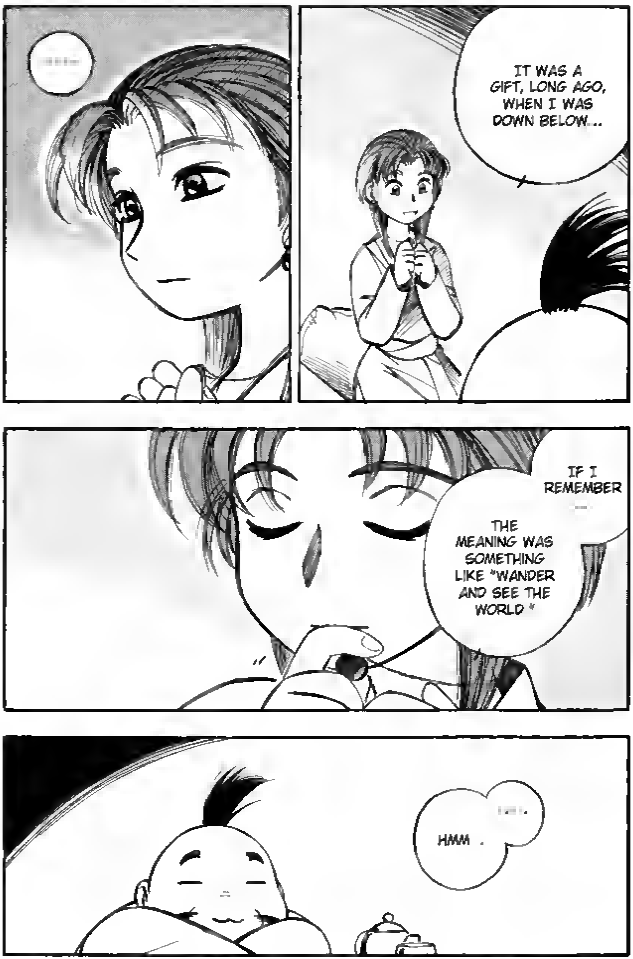

I WONDER IF IT WILL RAIN...?

WHAT ABOUT INLAND?


THANK YOU
HERE HAVE SOME TEA.

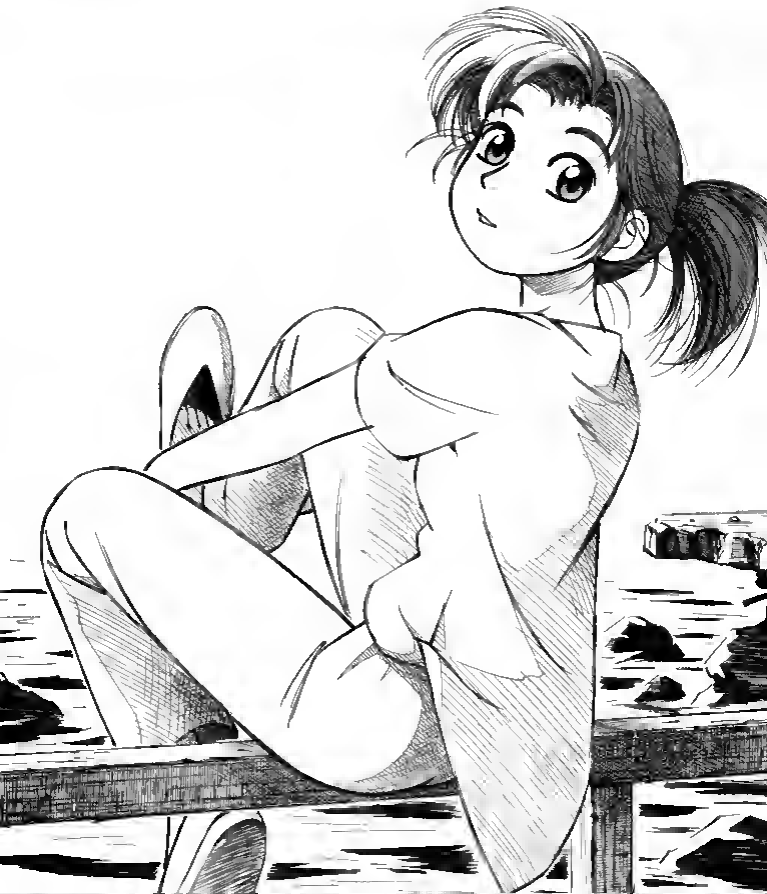



WHAT AN UNUSUAL NECKLACE
IS IT SOME SORT OF CHARM?
HMM?
OH...
THIS


IT WAS A GIFT, LONG AGO, WHEN I WAS DOWN BELOW...
IF I REMEMBER
THE MEANING WAS SOMETHING LIKE "WANDER AND SEE THE WORLD."
HMM.

YEP...
I GUESS THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DOING
WELL

Story 59 Indigo Eye



I thought I should take a few pictures around the house.
.....

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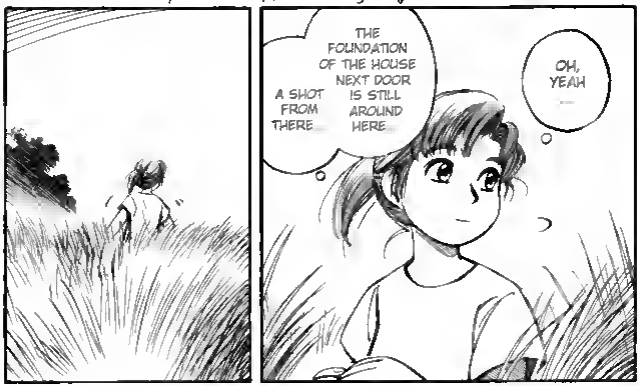

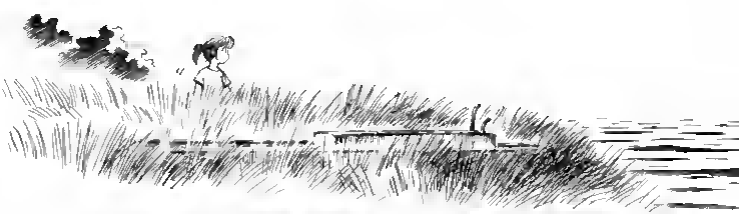

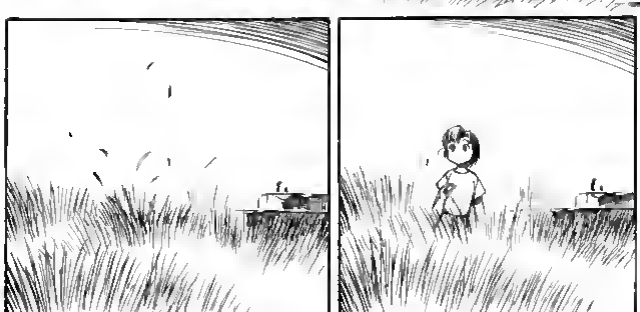

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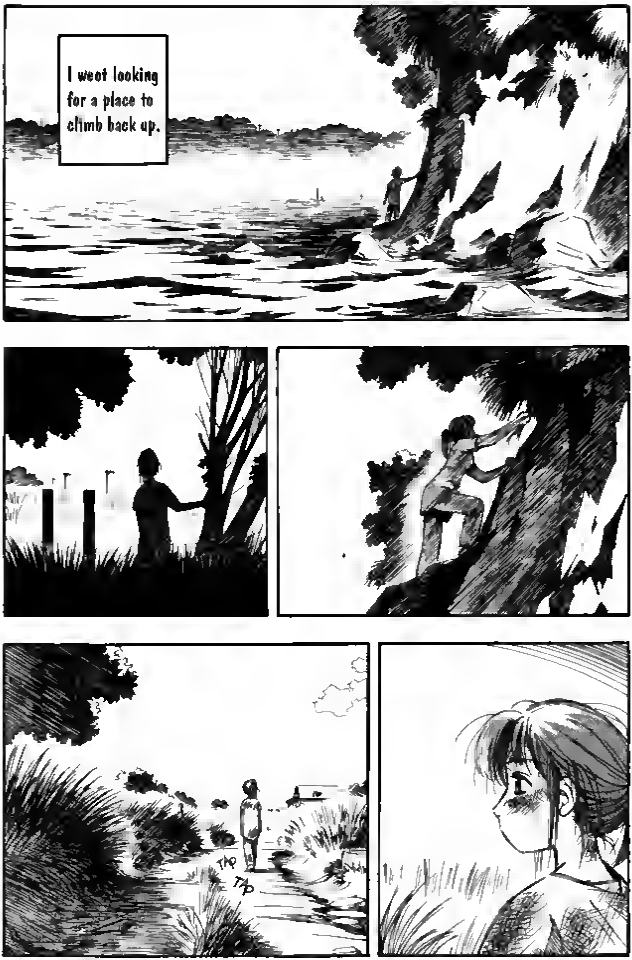
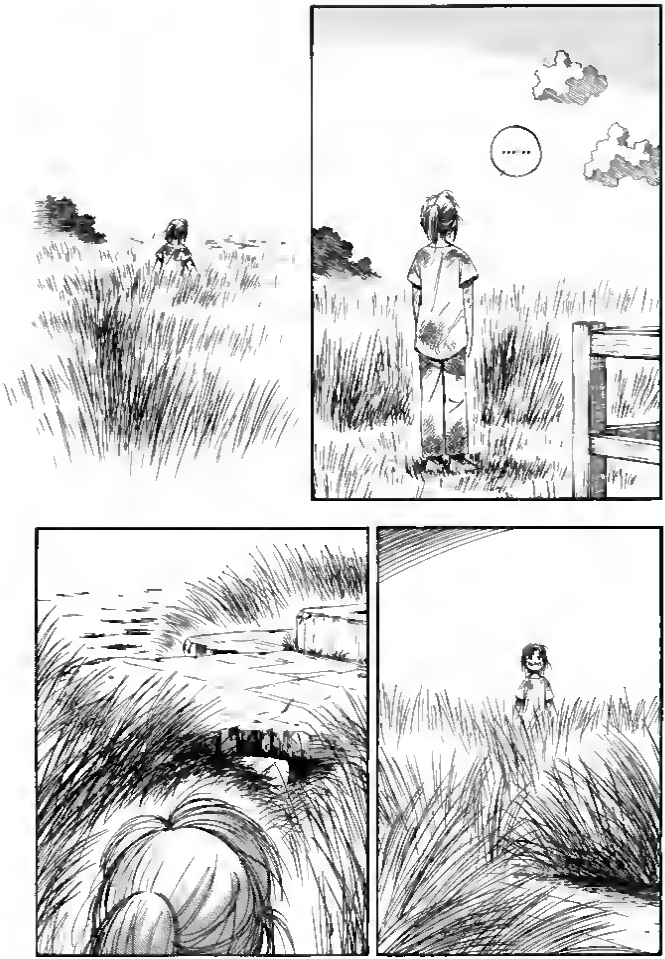
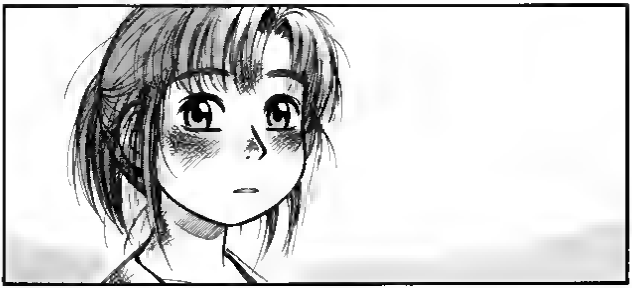
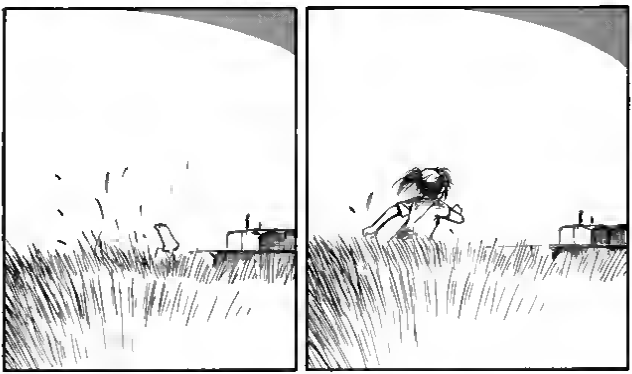
THE CAMERA!!
.....!
.....

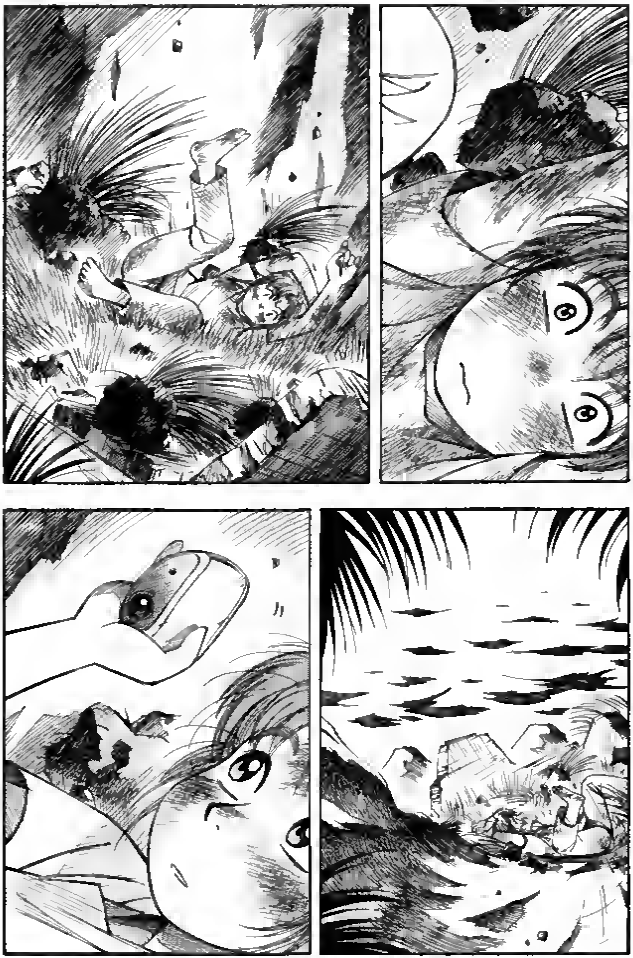
They slammed
away at the rocks...
The waves were
unusually strong
for this time of
year.
I wouldn't be
able to find
anything in these
murky waters.

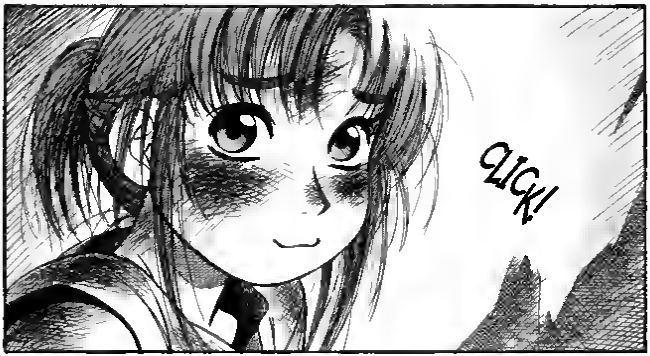

I went looking for a place to climb back up.
TAP TAP



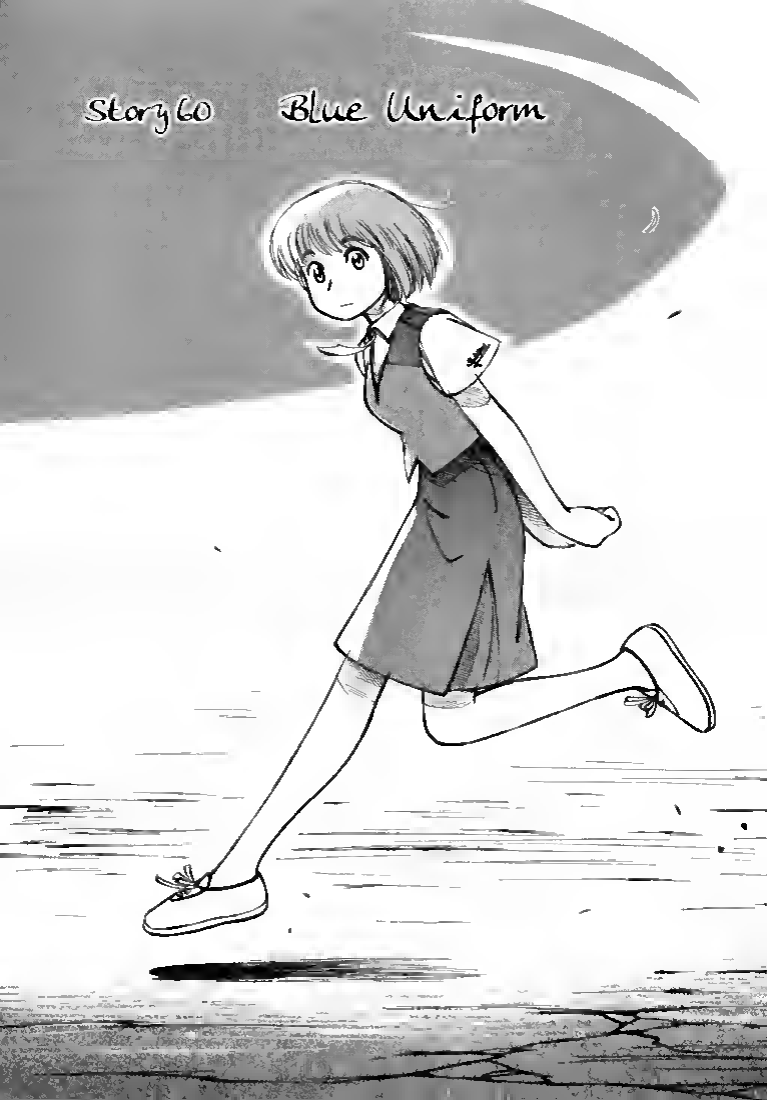


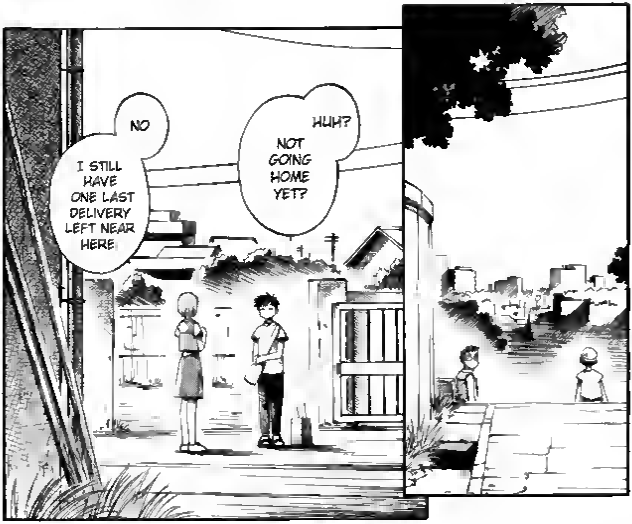


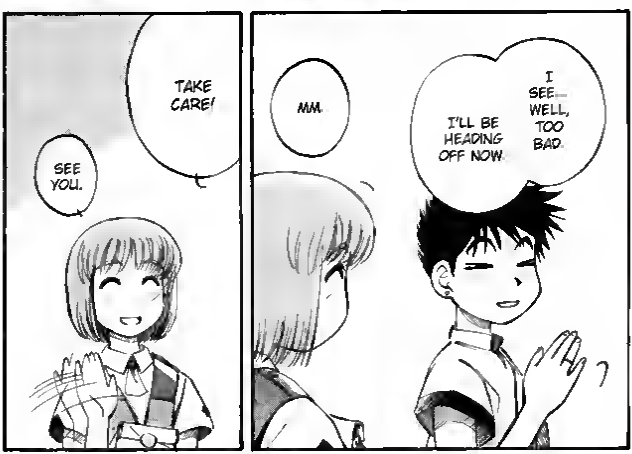



CLICK!

Story 60 Blue Uniform




NO
I STILL HAVE ONE LAST DELIVERY LEFT NEAR HERE.
HUH?
NOT GOING HOME YET?


TAKE CARE!
SEE YOU.
MM.
I'LL BE HEADING OFF NOW.
I SEE— WELL, TOO BAD.

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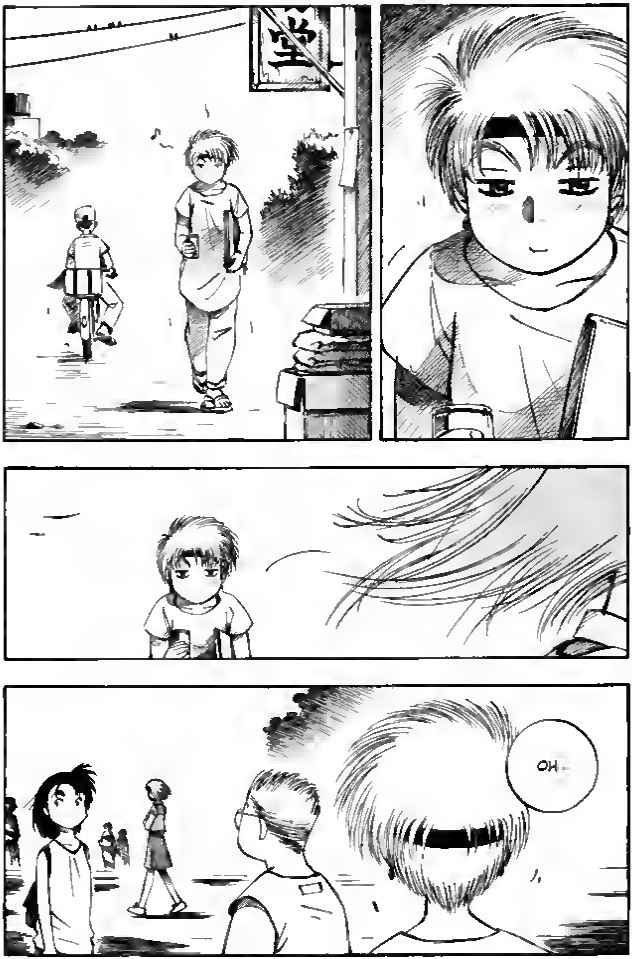
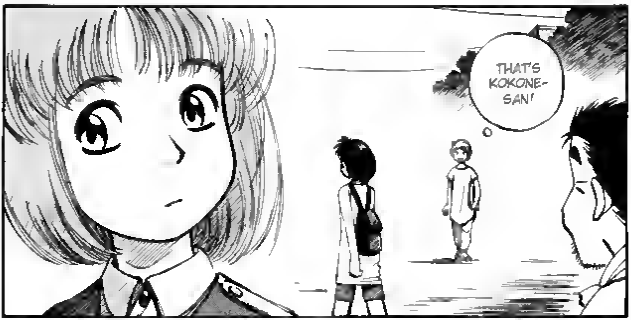
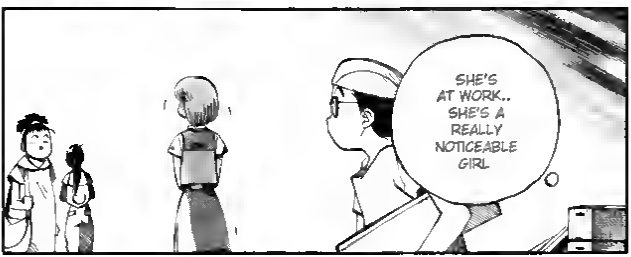
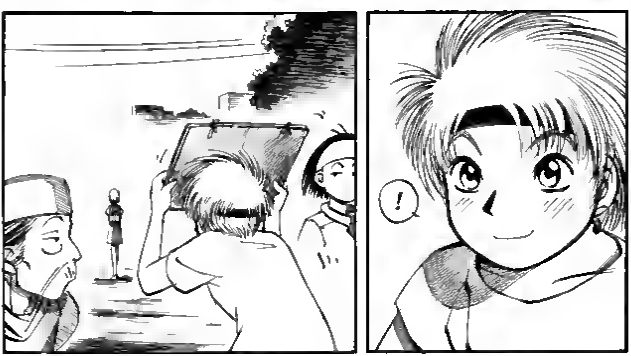

OH...


THAT'S KOKONE-SAN!


SHE'S AT WORK.. SHE'S A REALLY NOTICEABLE GIRL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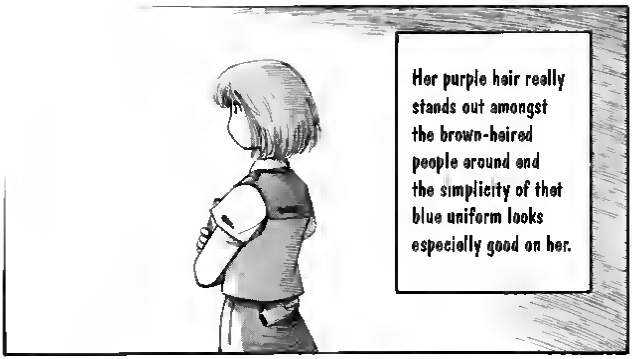
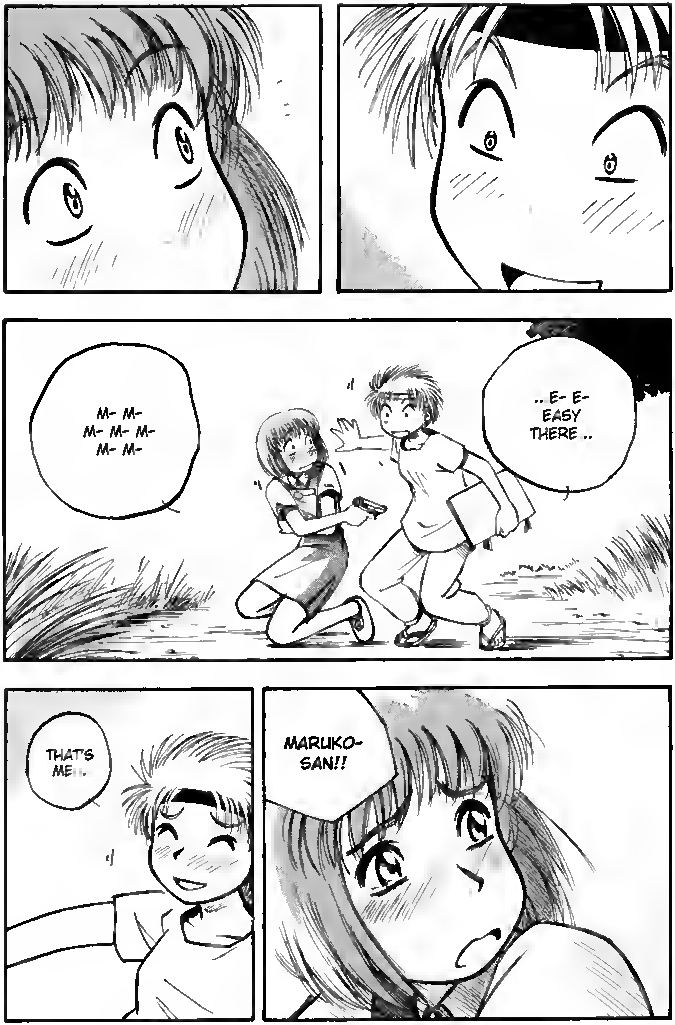

Her purple hair really stands out amongst the brown-haired people around and the simplicity of that blue uniform looks especially good on her.

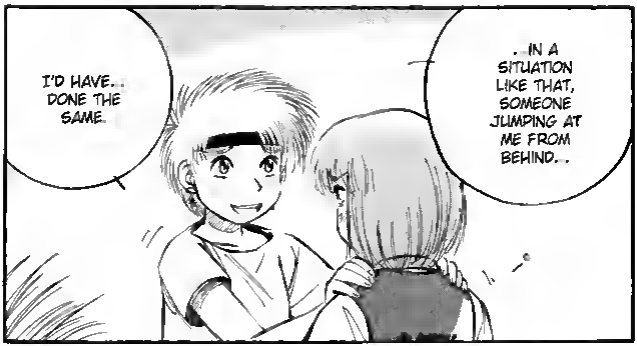
But more than anything...

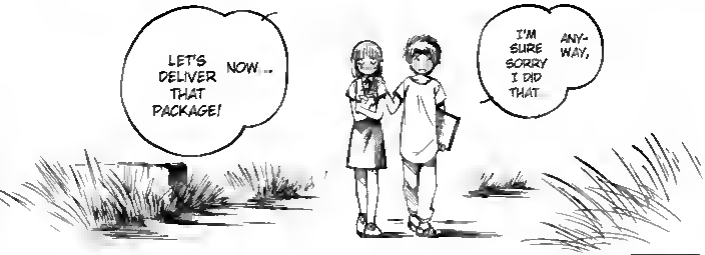
WHAT IS IT? HER DIET?
MY IMAG-INATION!?
Her skin is so beautiful... even though she's a robot like me, the difference is unmistakable.

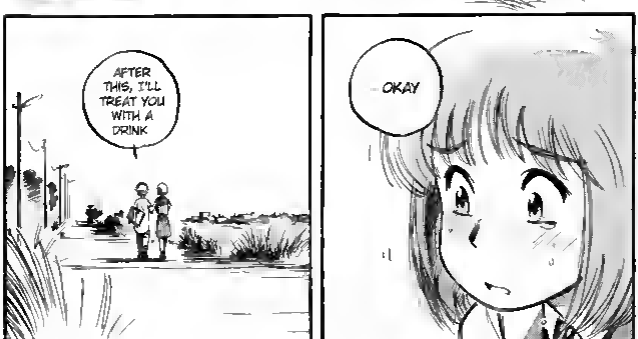
わっ!!
SFX <BOOM>


M- M-
M- M- M-
M- M-
.. E- E-
EASY
THERE ..
THAT'S
ME!!
MARUKO-
SAN!!

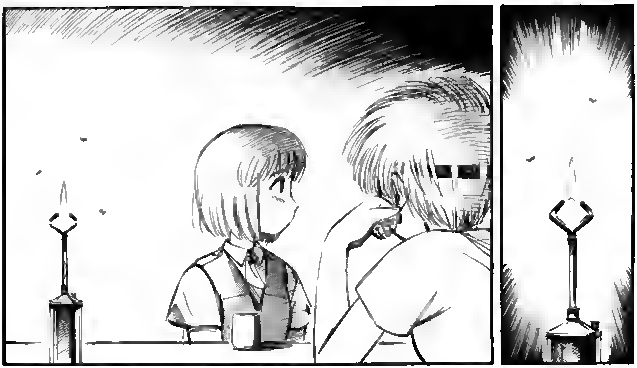
UWAAAAA..
I'M SO SORRY! I'M SO SORRY!
YOU'VE GOT GOOD REFLEXES, I'LL SAY THAT.
I KNOW.
WAAA..


I'D HAVE.. DONE THE SAME.
..IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT, SOMEONE JUMPING AT ME FROM BEHIND..


LET'S DELIVER THAT PACKAGE! NOW..
I'M SURE SORRY I DID THAT ANY-WAY,


AFTER THIS, I'LL TREAT YOU WITH A DRINK
OKAY

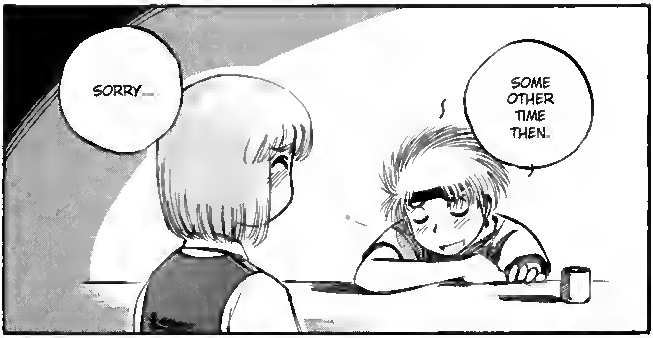
なぎや



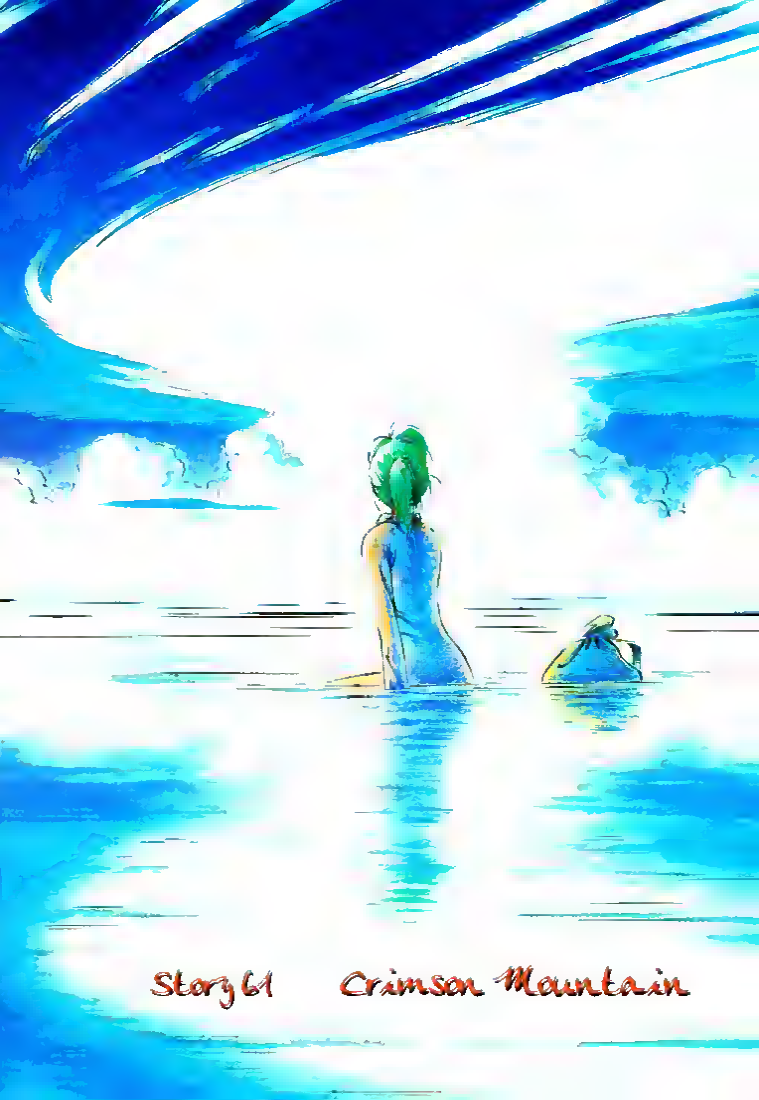
I KNOW, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS.
I AM SORRY, THOUGH, REALLY.
—MM.
YOU'VE CALMED DOWN, FINALLY

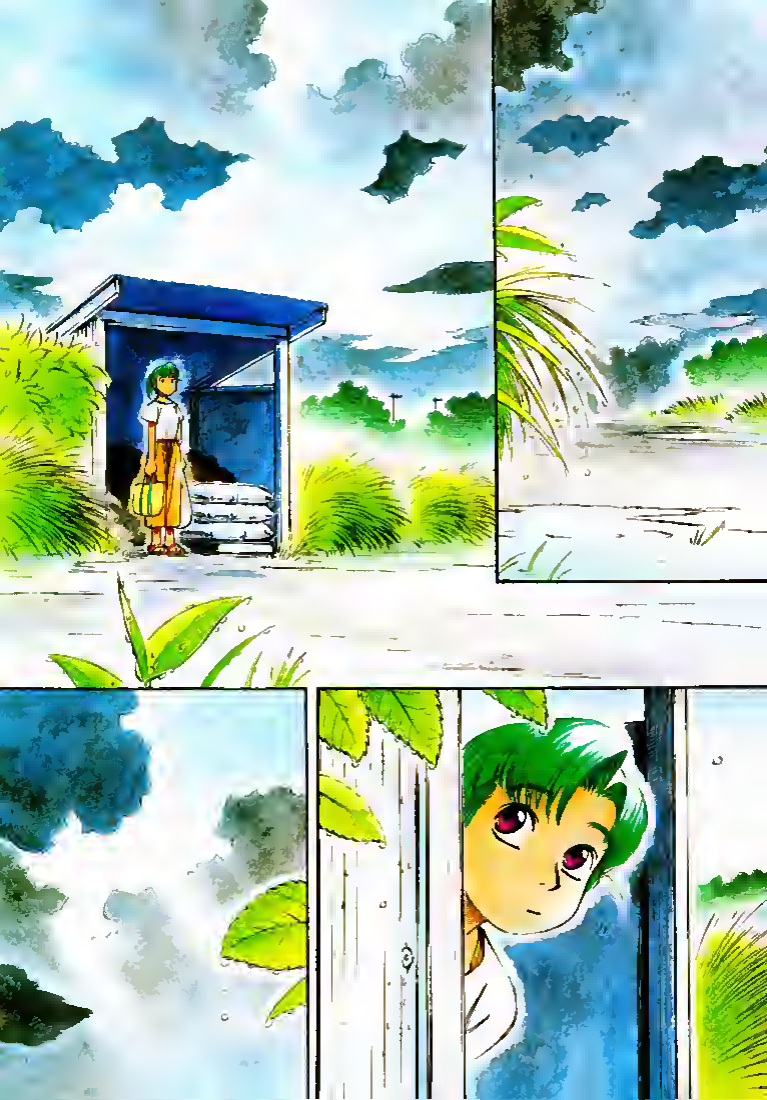
MA-A-AN..
GULP
NO. I HAD THREE..
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAD ANY BULLETS IN THAT THING, RIGHT?
BUT, I REALLY DIDN'T EXPECT THAT..
YEAH, I KNOW, I KNOW, JUST LIKE A TASER, RIGHT?
OOH!
WELL, THEY'RE JUST 9MM ELECTROSHOCK BULLETS, BUT..
PHEW
HMM-M-M..
I'M TOLD THEY'D LEAVE A SCAR..
YEAH... BUT STILL, THEY AREN'T A LAUGHING MATTER
GULP!

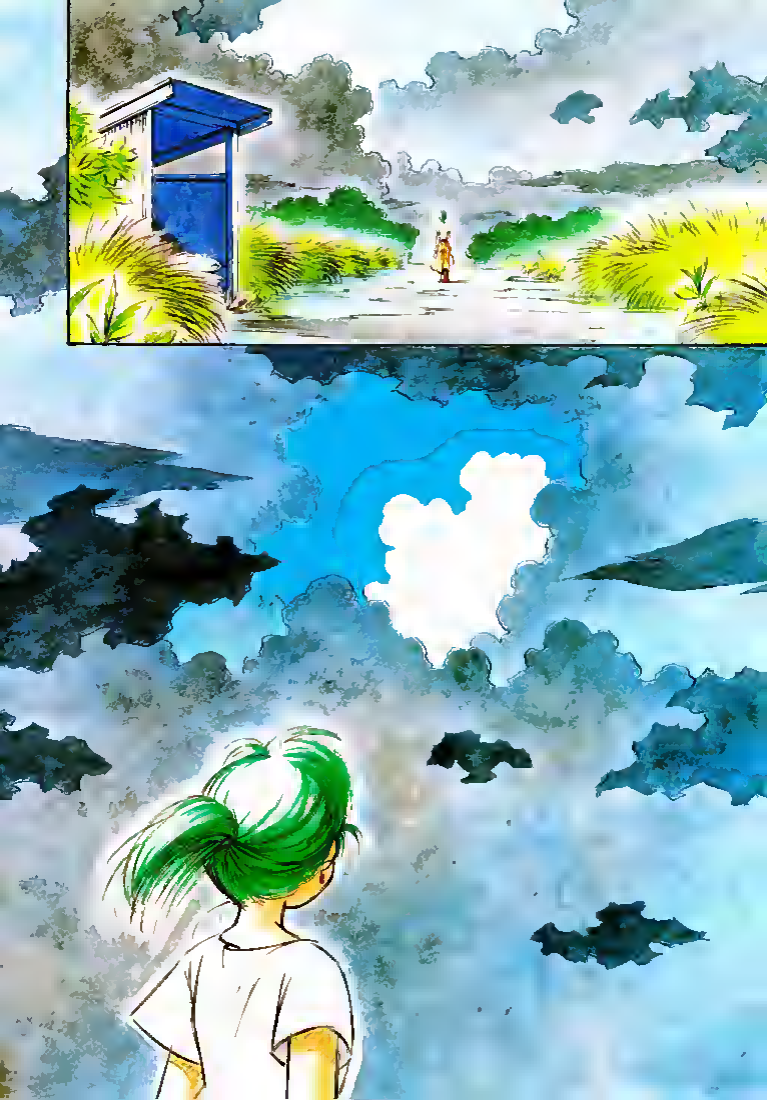
OH, THAT'S RIGHT!
KOKONE-SAN, ARE YOU DOING ANYTHING FOR SUMMER VACATION?
WILL YOU COME SWIMMING WITH ME IN CHIBA?
UH...
?
UM... ER... I- I...
THIS SUMMER... I WAS PLANNING TO HEAD SOUTH...
AH, OKAY THEN.
SOUTH, HUH?
THAT'S TOO BAD


SORRY...
SOME OTHER TIME THEN.

NO... THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE.
MM...


Story 61 Crimson Mountain





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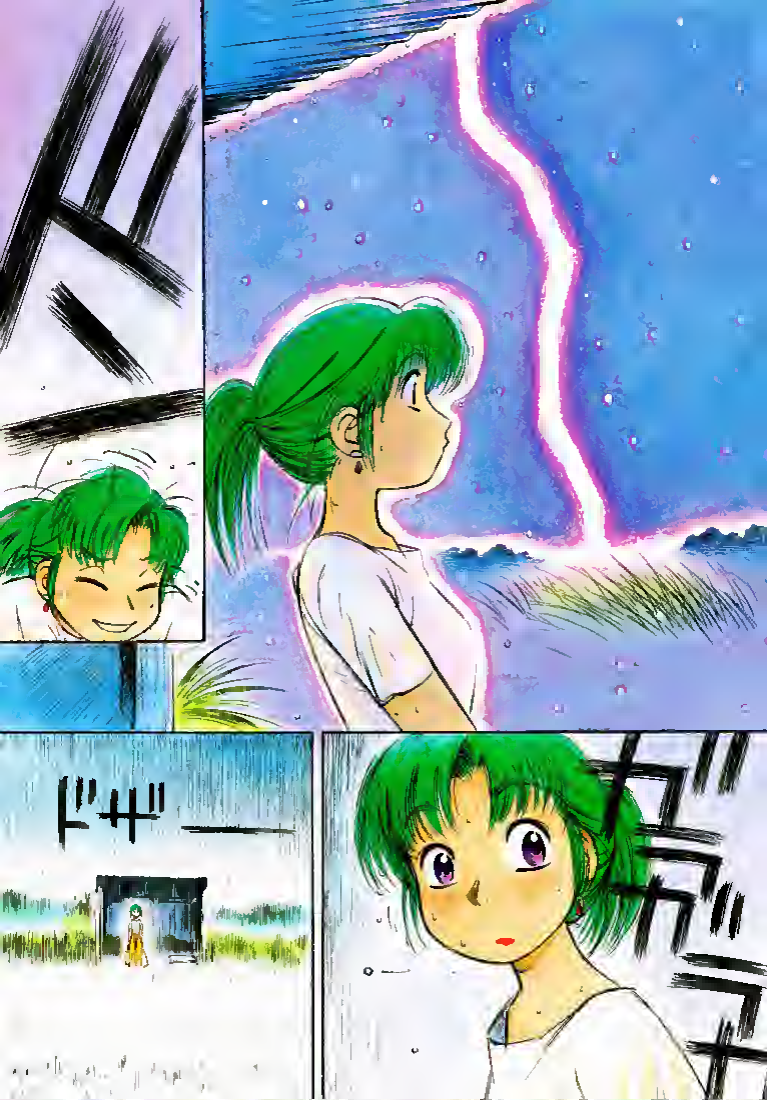
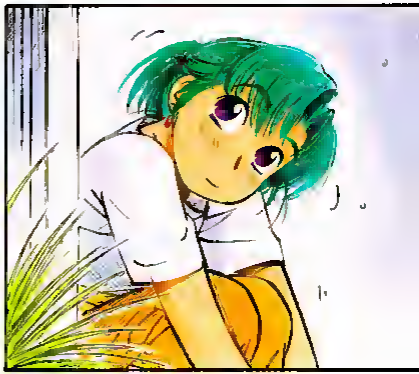
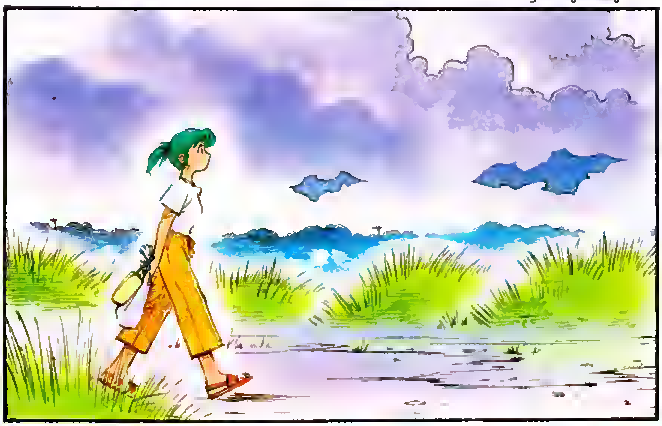
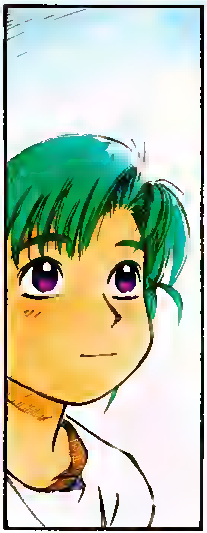
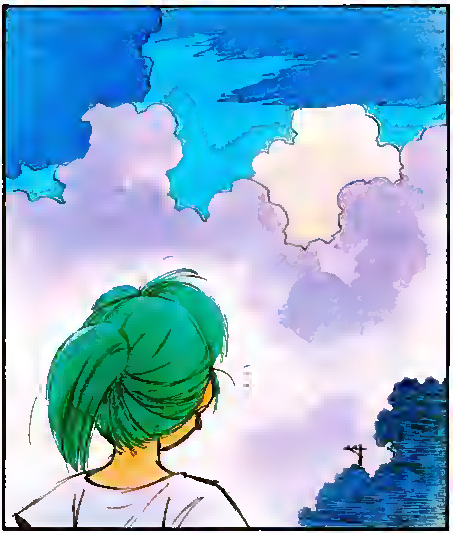
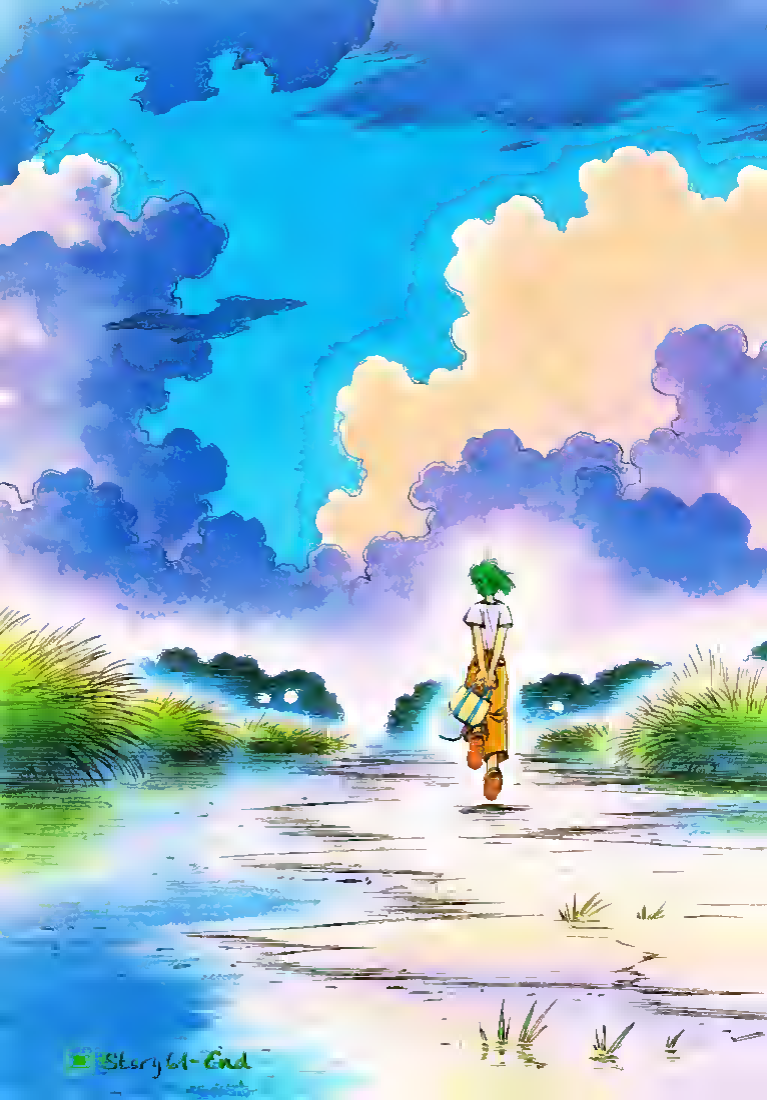




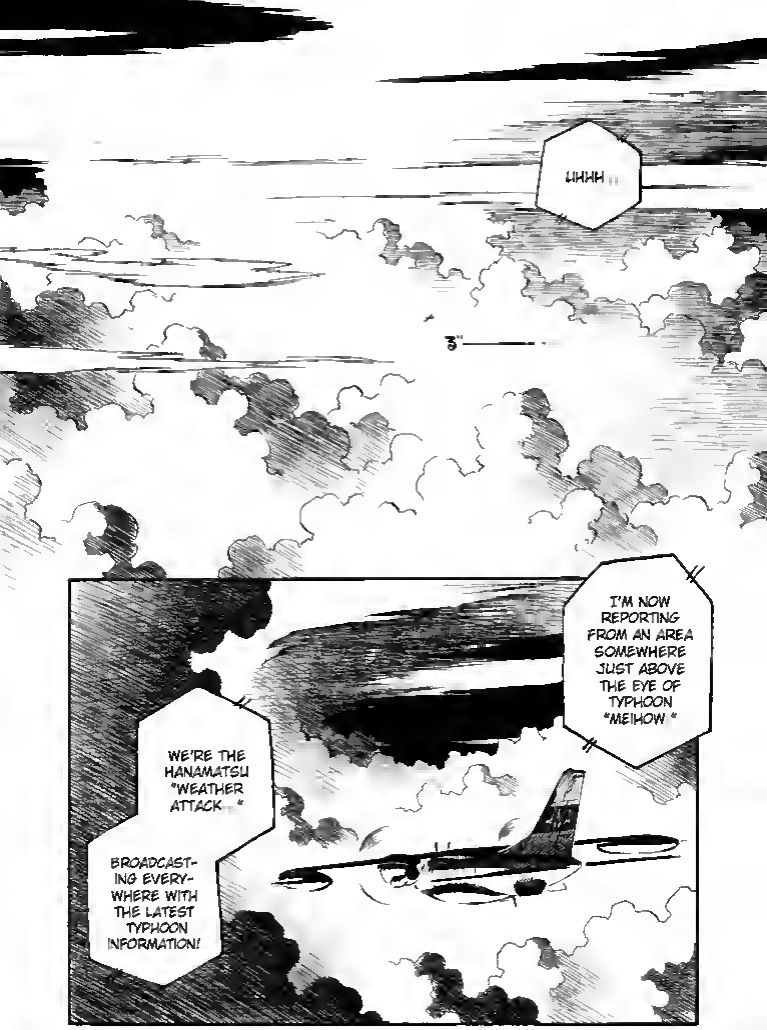







Story61-End

Story 62 Typhoon


UHHH...
3"
I'M NOW REPORTING FROM AN AREA SOMEWHERE JUST ABOVE THE EYE OF TYPHOON "MEIHOW."
WE'RE THE HANAMATSU "WEATHER ATTACK."
BROADCASTING EVERYWHERE WITH THE LATEST TYPHOON INFORMATION!

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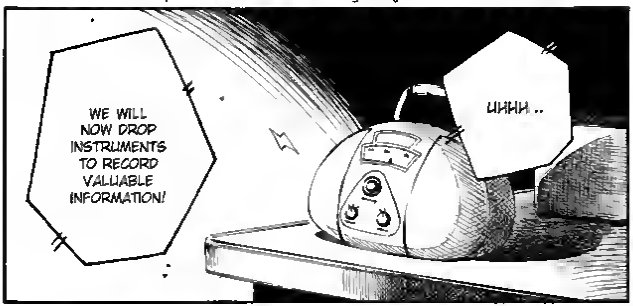

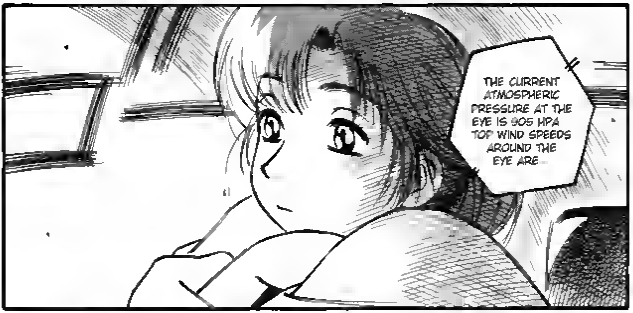

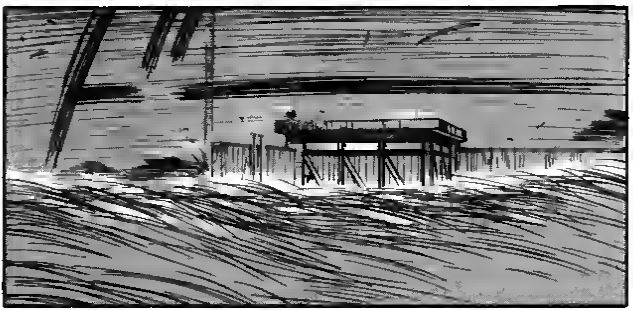

I was only a little nervous as evening approached.
I put up the storm shutters.
A typhoon was coming...
I prepared the house as usual.
He said, "I've got a bad feeling about this one, so bring only your most important possessions and spend the night at the station."
In the evening, Ojisan arrived in his car.
So that's what I did.

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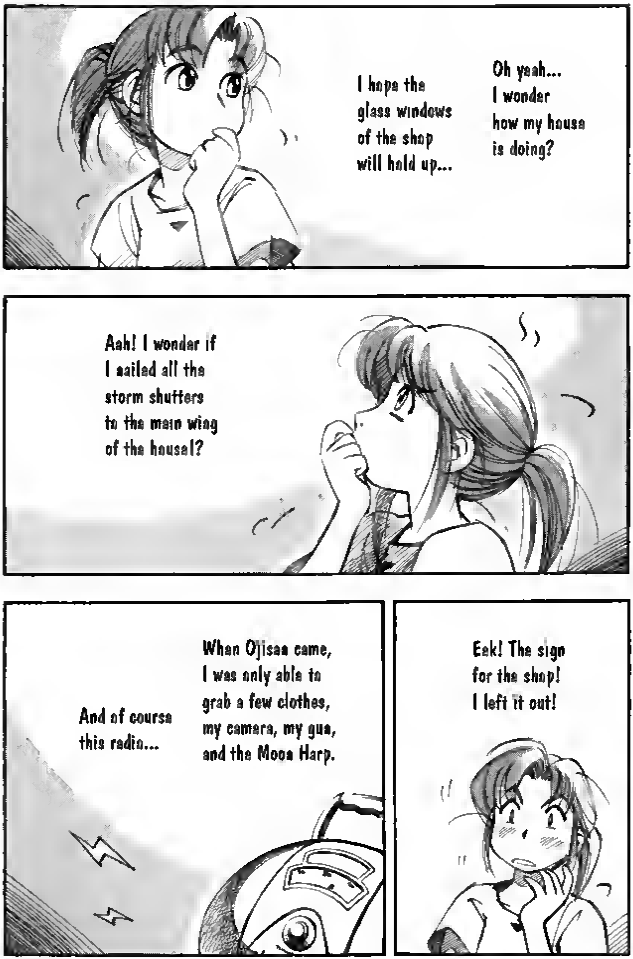
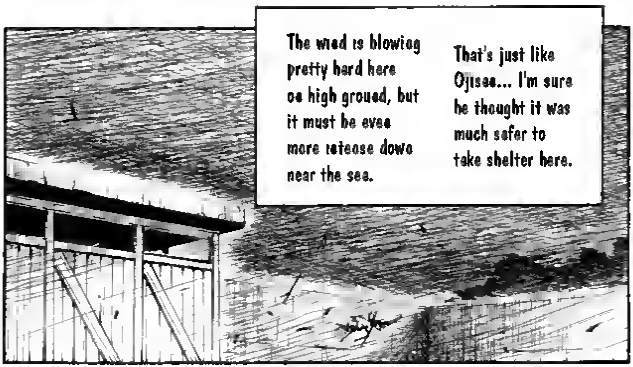
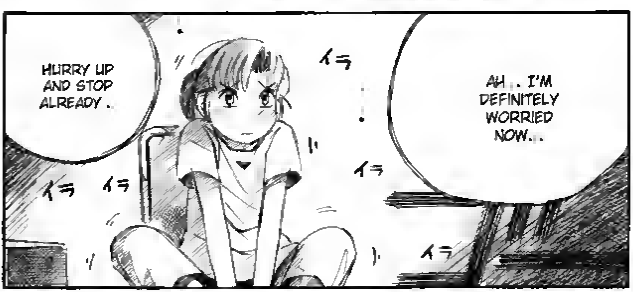
A little while later, the storm hit.
Saying he was "gonna check out the others" he drove off towards home.
The sounds of rain like flying gravel, pelted the building in waves.
The wind sounded like it was tearing the earth apart.

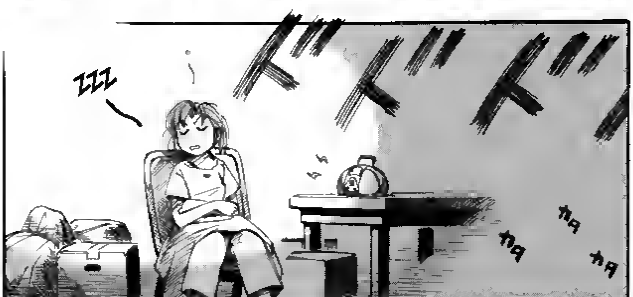
Morn-
ing...
Meihow is gradually dying down.

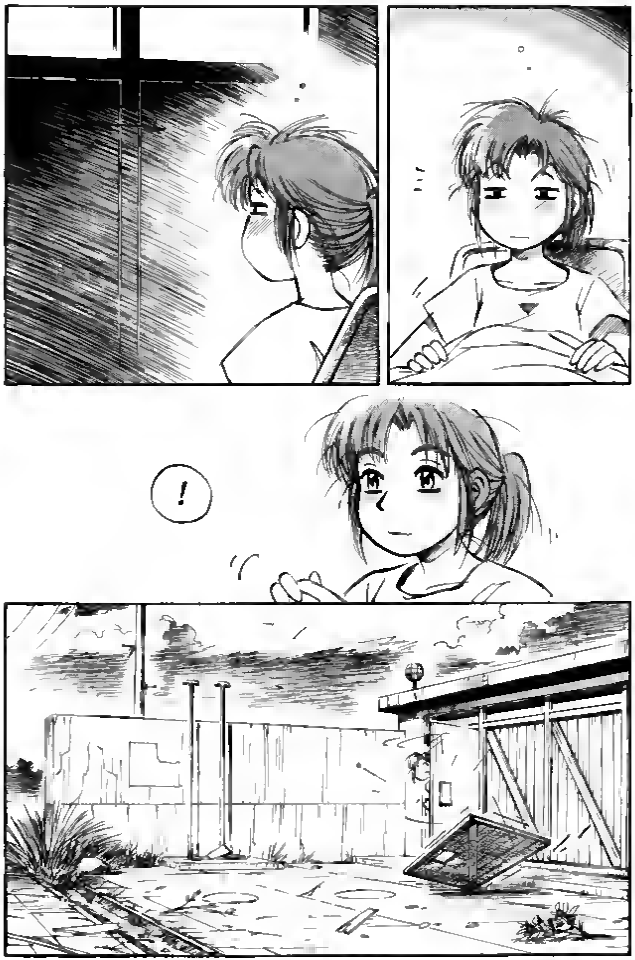
It seems the typhoon is still hanging over the area.
.....
I wonder how much longer I'll be listening to the sound of wind whipping around concrete?
It's making me feel uneasy.
He seems to know a lot about typhoons, so I suppose I shouldn't worry.
...I wonder if Ojisan's okay?


I hope the glass windows of the shop will hold up...
Oh yeah... I wonder how my house is doing?
Aah! I wonder if I nailed all the storm shutters to the main wing of the house!?
And of course this radio...
When Ojisan came, I was only able to grab a few clothes, my camera, my gun, and the Moon Harp.
Eek! The sign for the shop! I left it out!


The wind is blowing pretty hard here on high ground, but it must be even more intense down near the sea.
That's just like Ojisan... I'm sure he thought it was much safer to take shelter here.

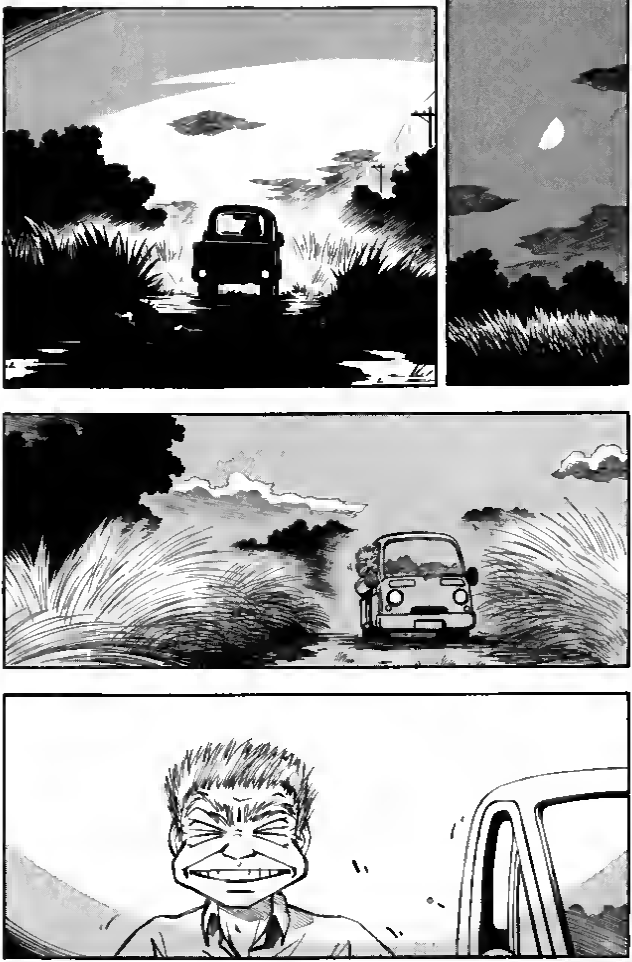

HURRY UP AND STOP ALREADY..
AH... I'M DEFINITELY WORRIED NOW...


ZZZ



FROM SHOUNAN, SINCE IT HIT LAND, TYPHOON "MEIHOU" IS NOW PASSING OVER THE PLAINS ..
KISHIMA-NADA RECIEVED THE BRUNT OF THE WINDS WHILE IBARAKI WAS LEFT MAINLY UNTOUCHED. UHHH... OUR TEAM HAS MANAGED TO...

PHEW



Story to be end

Story 63
My Place

OPEN
Café
Alpha

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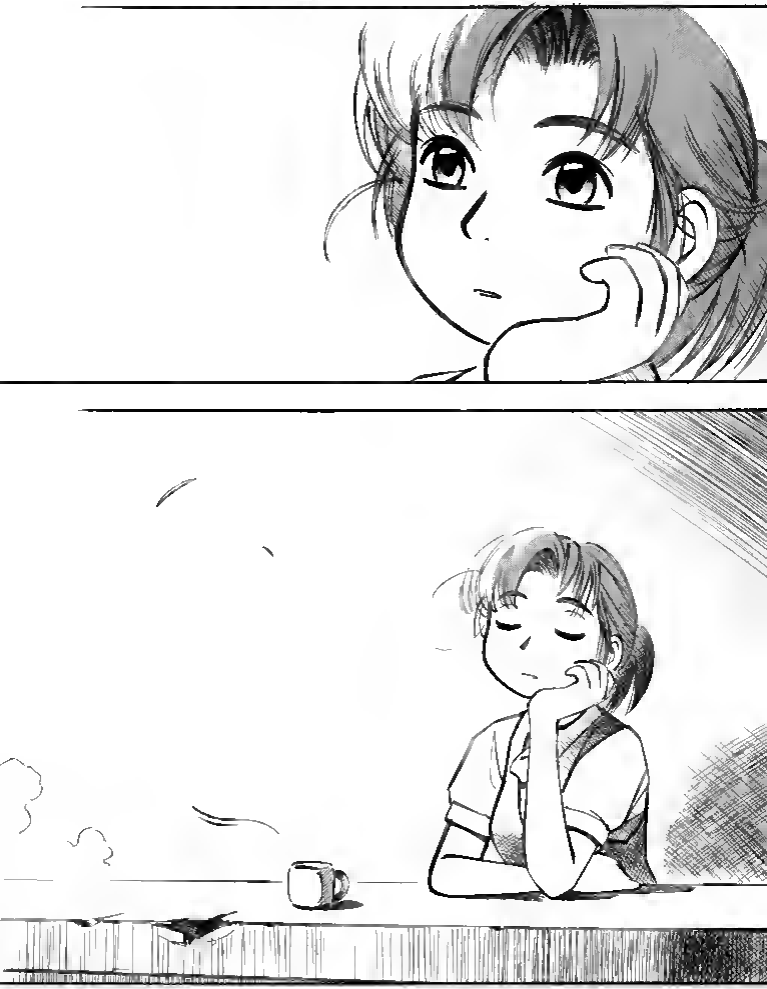

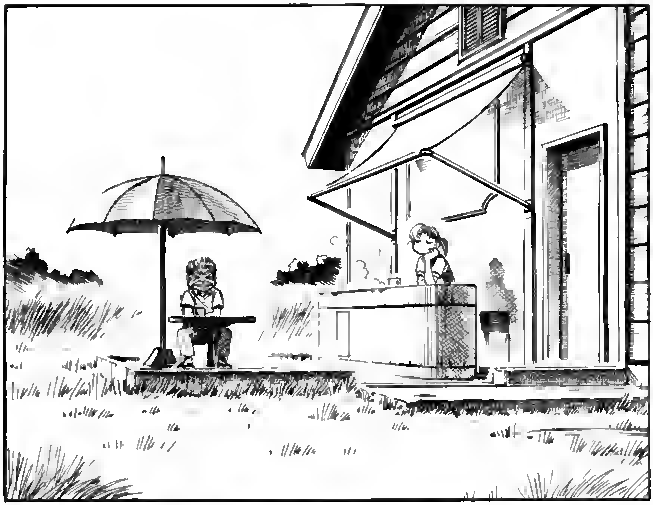

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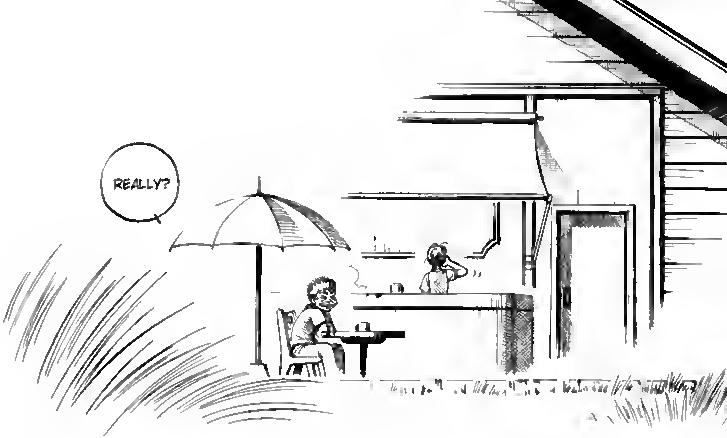
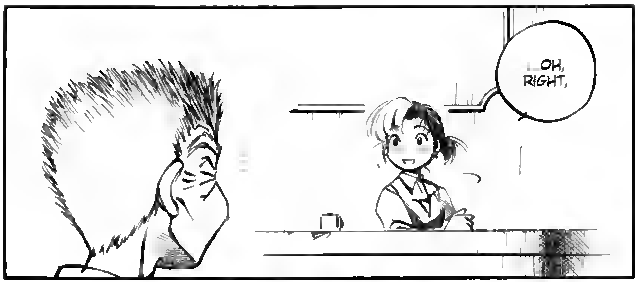
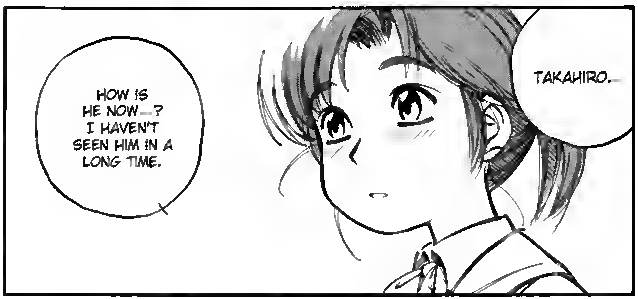
I WANT TO OPEN A STORE AT YOUR GAS STATION
THAT DOESN'T SEEM VERY APPROPRIATE
BUT...
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THE TYPHOON WOULD BLOW AWAY THE ENTIRE STORE
YEAH.
ALTHOUGH, I DID HAVE A PREMONITION ABOUT THAT

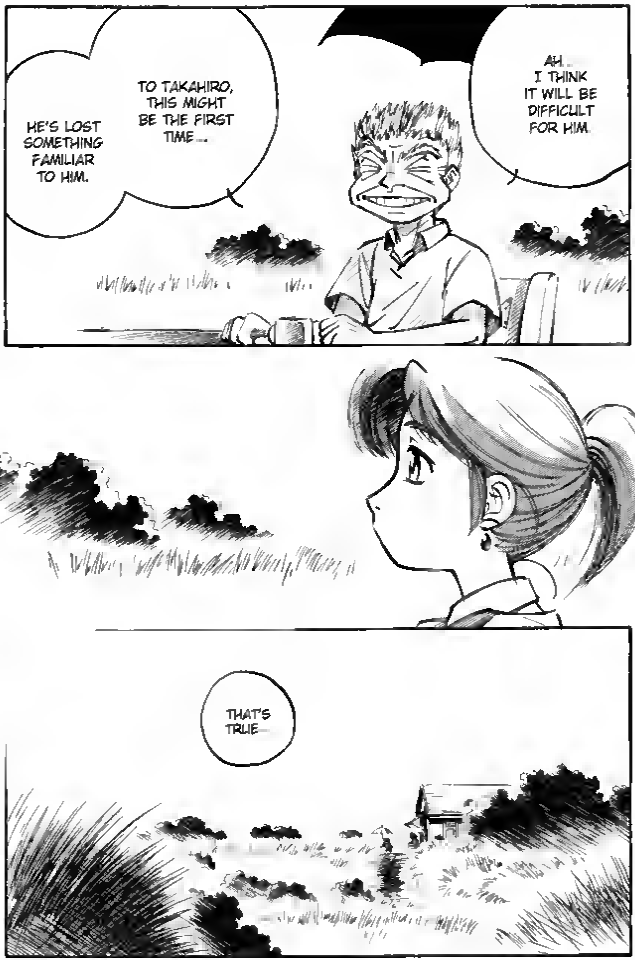
Translated by youkosiren from #MangaProject on irc.LinkIRC.net

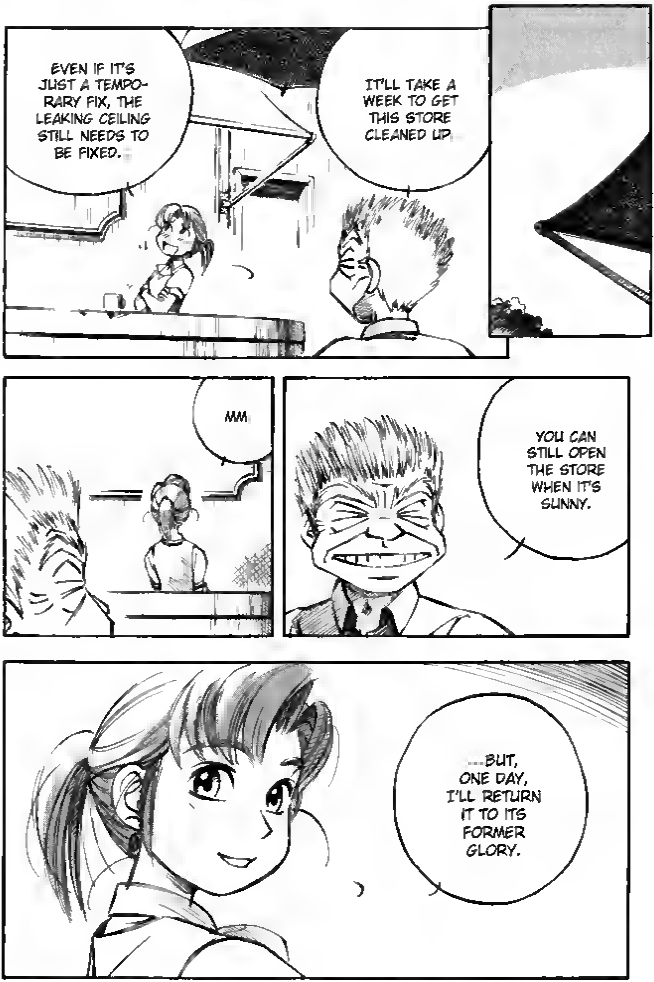
THE STORE'S ALREADY RUINED, SO IT WON'T BE OF MUCH USE.
NOW I PROBABLY NEED TO WORK HARDER
BEFORE YOU CAME, THOUGH, I WAS SCARED HALF TO DEATH.
I WAS REALLY PROUD OF YOU.
THAT DAY, WHEN I SAW YOU ACCEPT IT SO EASILY,
.....
...I REALLY WANTED TO CRY.
FOR A WHILE ACTUALLY


REALLY?


...OH, RIGHT.


HOW IS HE NOW...? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A LONG TIME.
TAKAHIRO...


HE'S LOST SOMETHING FAMILIAR TO HIM.
TO TAKAHIRO, THIS MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME...
AH... I THINK IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM.
THAT'S TRUE...


EVEN IF IT'S JUST A TEMPORARY FIX, THE LEAKING CEILING STILL NEEDS TO BE FIXED.
IT'LL TAKE A WEEK TO GET THIS STORE CLEANED UP.
MM
YOU CAN STILL OPEN THE STORE WHEN IT'S SUNNY.
...BUT, ONE DAY, I'LL RETURN IT TO ITS FORMER GLORY.

I THINK THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN ALPHA ACT SO SERIOUSLY.
EH?
Oh!
BUT ANYWAY... YOU'LL HAVE TO USE HIGH QUALITY MATERIALS
THAT'LL COST A LOT.
TRUE...

I...
THINK I'LL LEAVE FOR A WHILE...

THIS TIME, I MIGHT BE AWAY FOR A LONG WHILE.

UMM... I GUESS SO...
GOING TO GET SOME MONEY!?

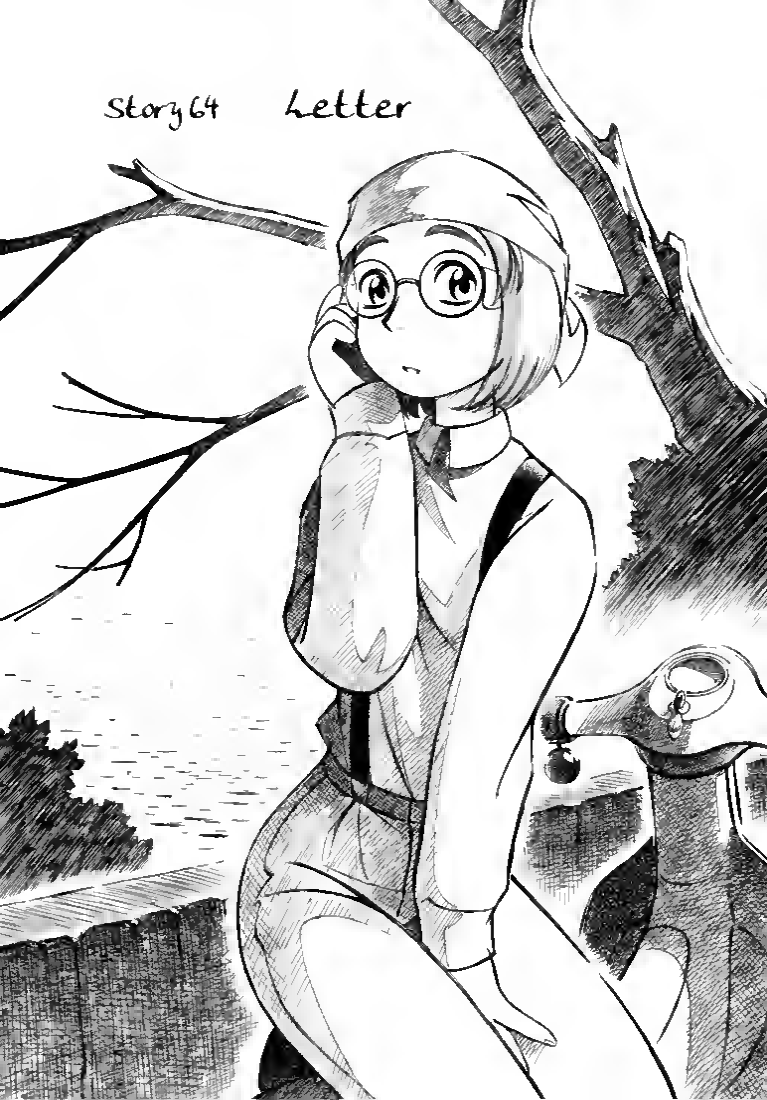
BEFORE, I ONLY KNEW TO STAY INSIDE THE STORE, SO I THOUGHT OF THIS PLACE AS MINE.
I ONLY FOUND OUT A WHILE AGO THAT I COULD TURN AT THE GAS STATION AND COME BACK HERE.
NOW, I KNOW ABOUT ASAHINA PASS, AND THAT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE THAT'S PART OF MY HOME TOO.
I THINK THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY.
I... EVER SINCE I'VE MET YOU AND KOKONE, I'VE BEEN THINKING

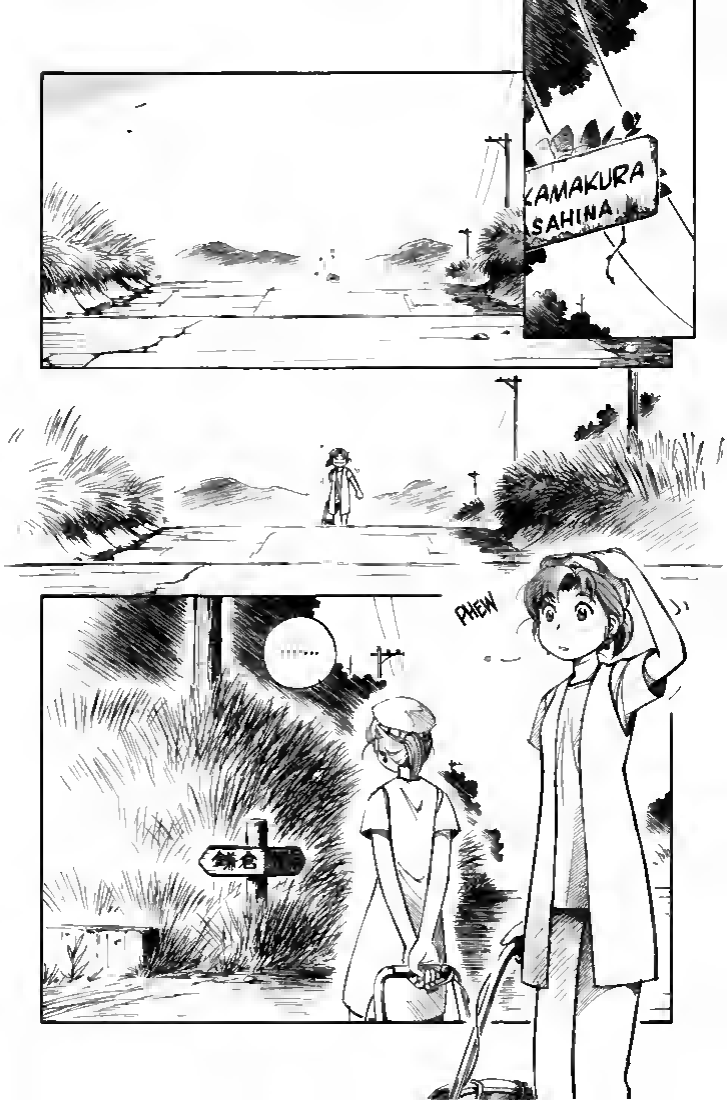
WHAT I THINK OF AS MY PLACE HAS GOTTEN LARGER...
I WANT TO EXPLORE,
AND I CAN EARN MONEY AT THE SAME TIME
...IS THAT SO?
YEAH... SO, THIS TIME, I WILL...
EXPLORE EVEN FURTHER.

IF I WAIT TOO LONG, IT'LL JUST BE MORE OF A BOTHER
WHEN ARE YOU LEAVING?
.....
IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS
REALLY?
THEN, YOU'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL
OKAY..

DO YOU WANT ANOTHER CUP?
SURE

Story 64 Letter




KAMAKURA
SAHINA
PHEW
……
鎌倉

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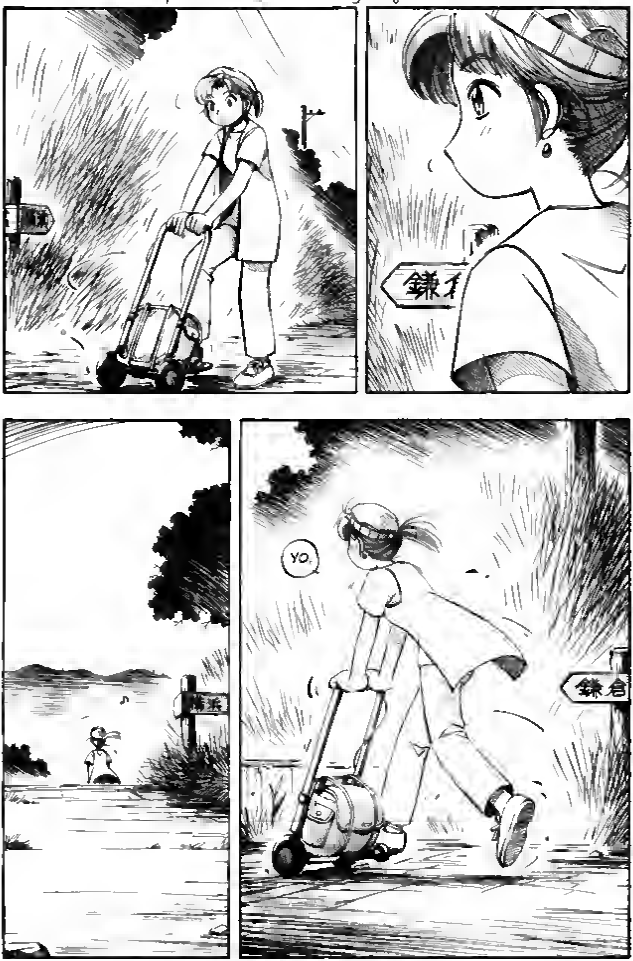

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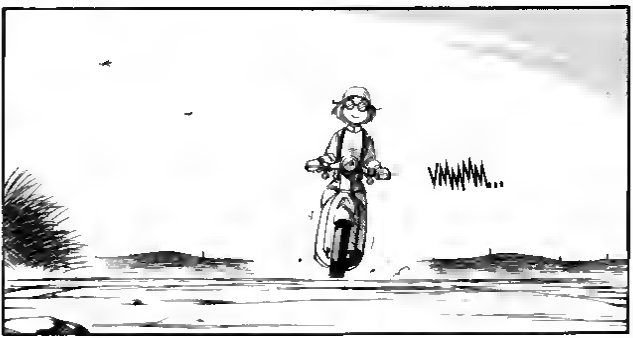
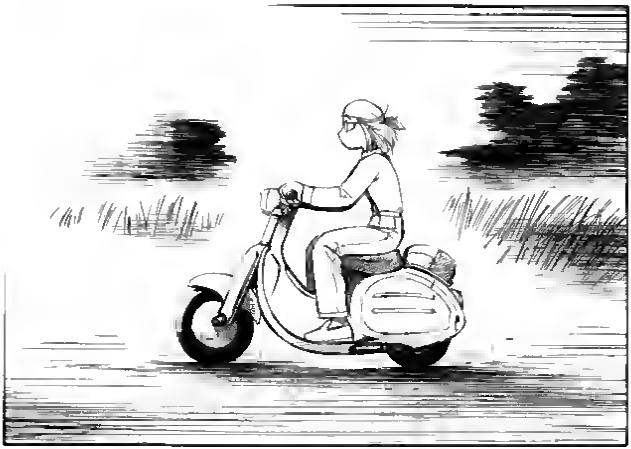
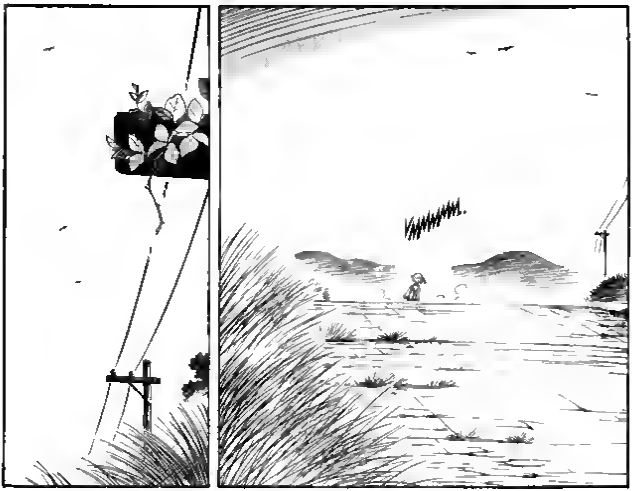
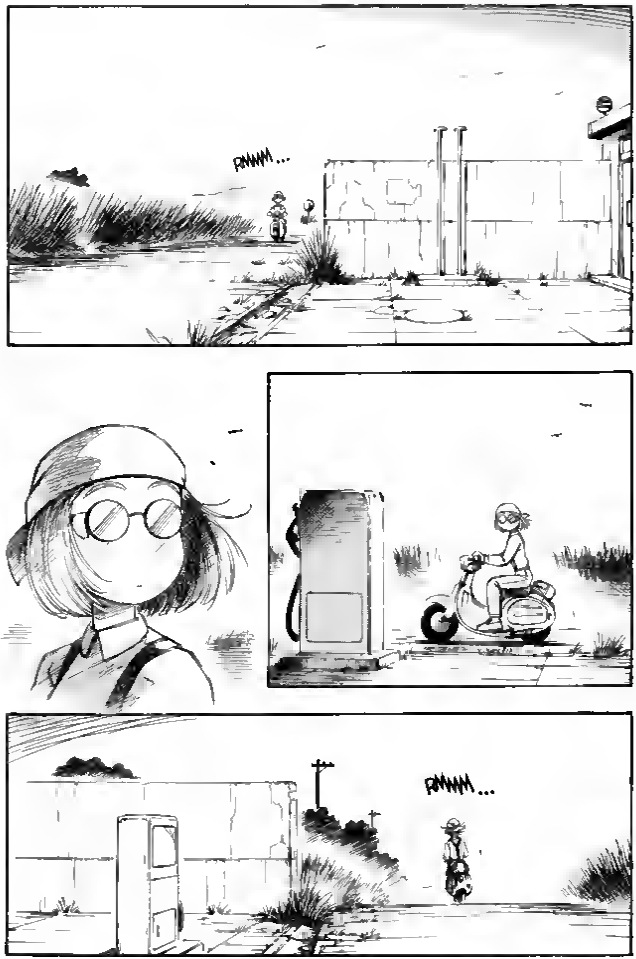
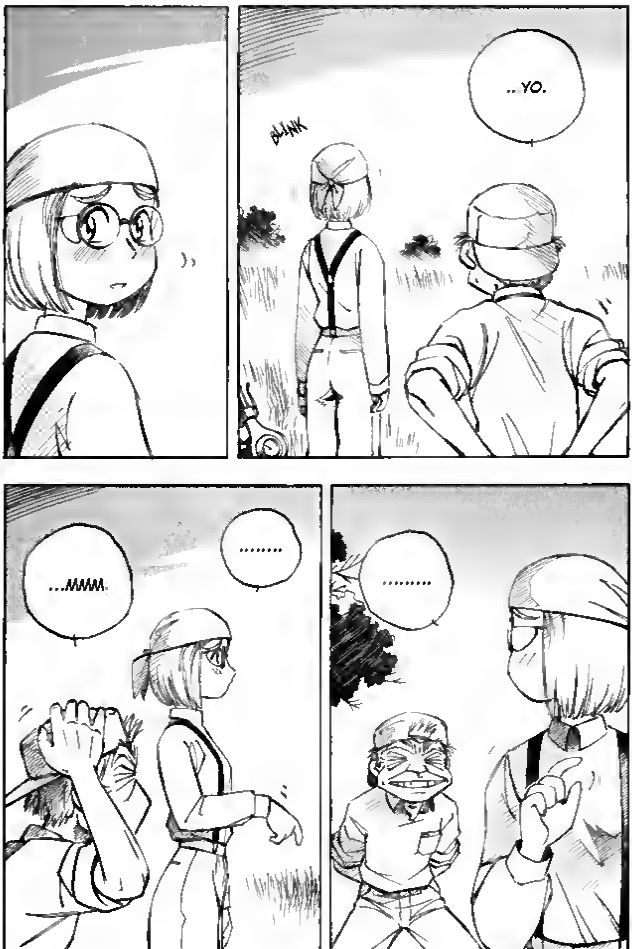


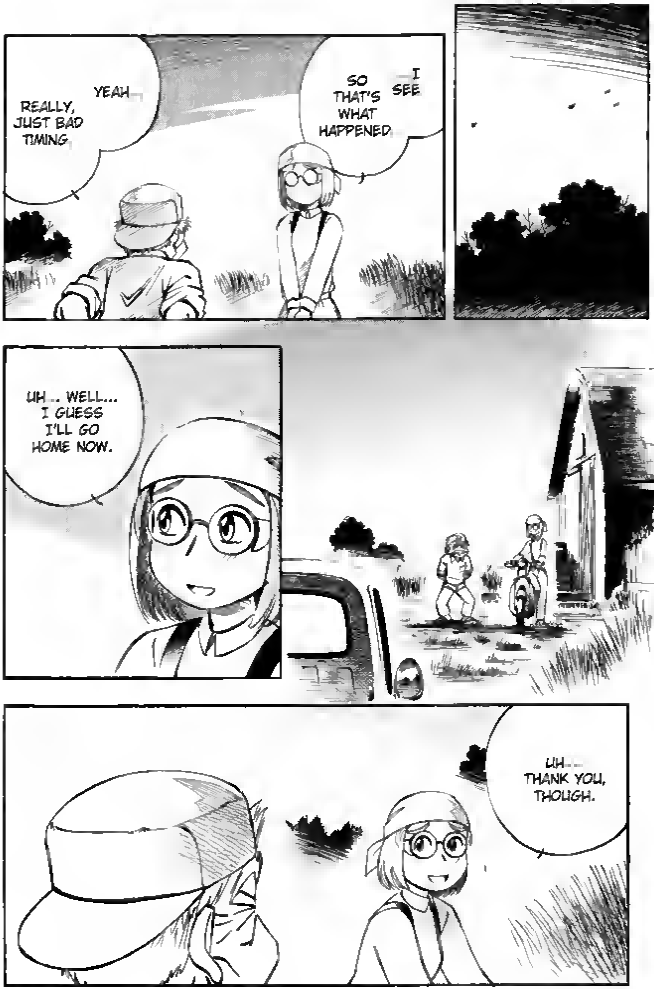




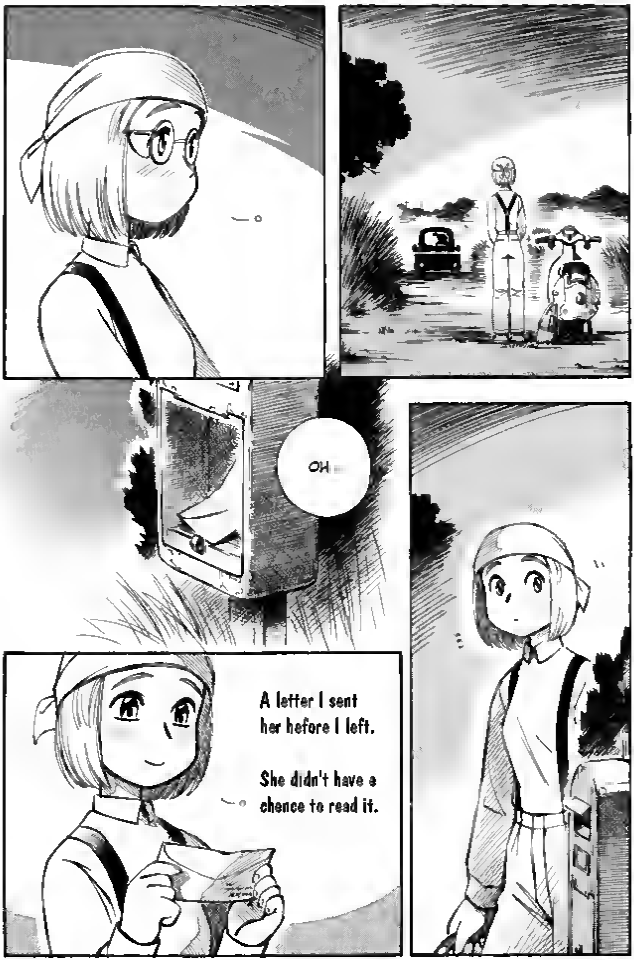

RRWWW...
RRWWW...

VAAAAAA...
AH...
PUTT
PUTT


..YO.
BLINK
.....
...MMM.
.....


I SEE
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
YEAH...
REALLY, JUST BAD TIMING.
UH.. WELL... I GUESS I'LL GO HOME NOW.
UH... THANK YOU, THOUGH.

WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT?
I'M KEEPING AN EYE ON THE PLACE FOR ALPHA-SAN
HEY
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
EH, BUT...
IT'LL BE DARK BEFORE YOU GET HOME.
YA CAN RETURN THE KEY TO ME TOMORROW AT THE STATION

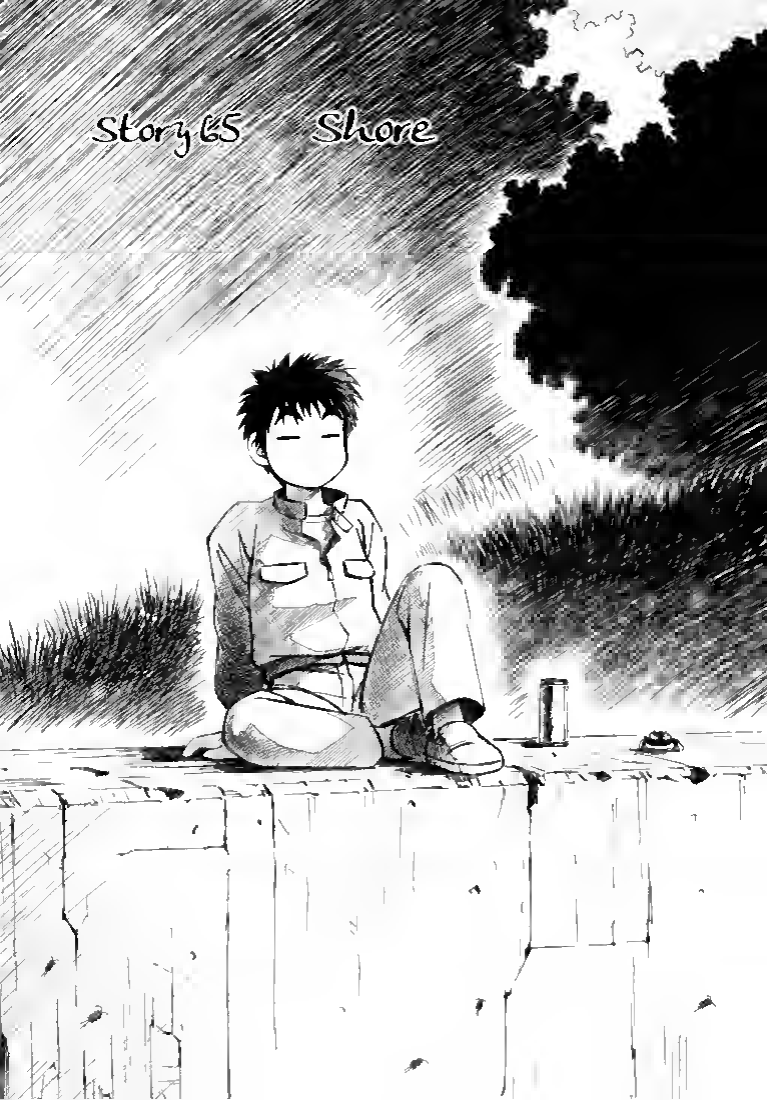

OH...
A letter I sent her before I left.
She didn't have a chance to read it.

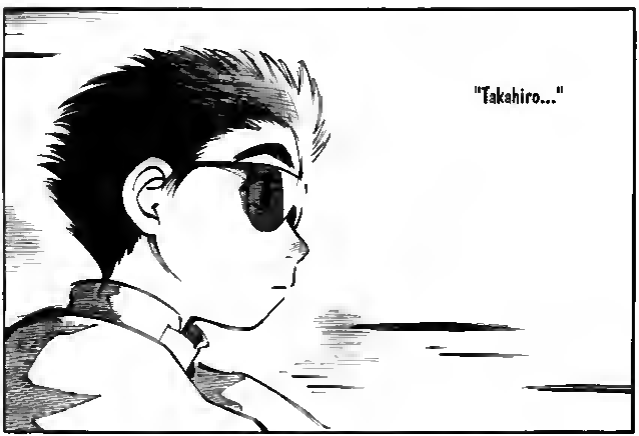
PARDON ME.....

.....
!
To Owner
Alpha
.....
To Owner
Alpha

SIGH...

IT'S A SHAME YOU MISSED HER.
THANKS A LOT FOR YOUR HELP
SHE DIDN'T SLEEP A WINK AT ALL


Story 65 Shore


"Takahiro..."

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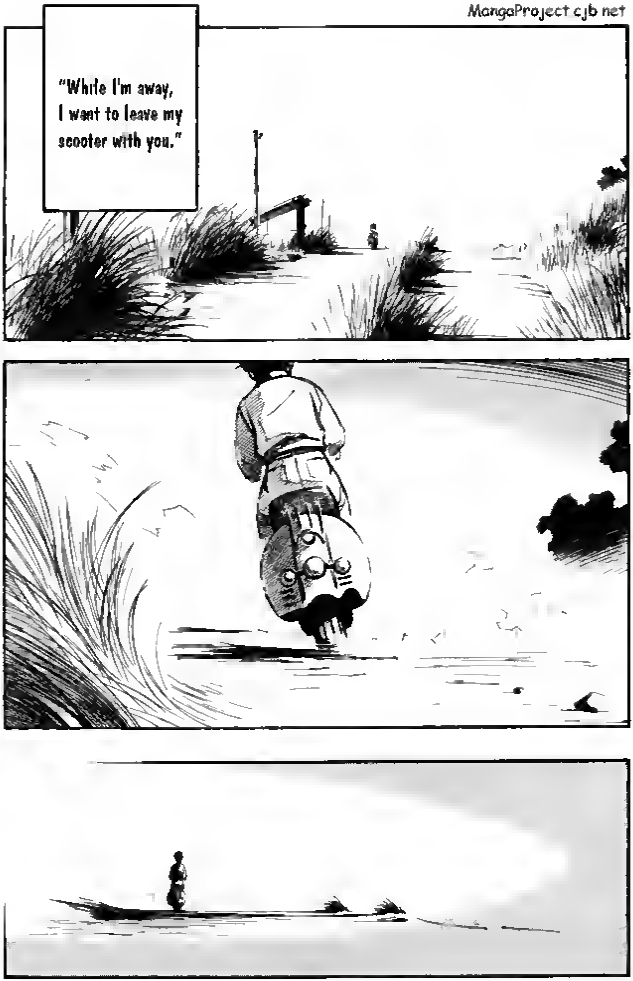
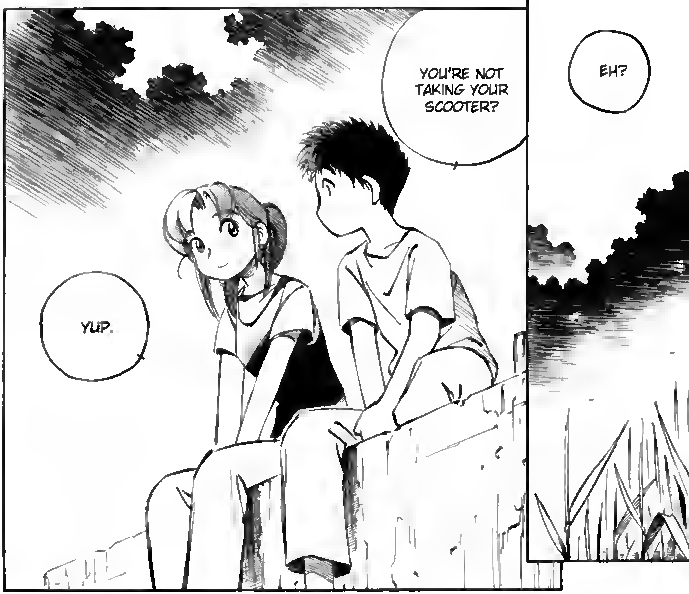
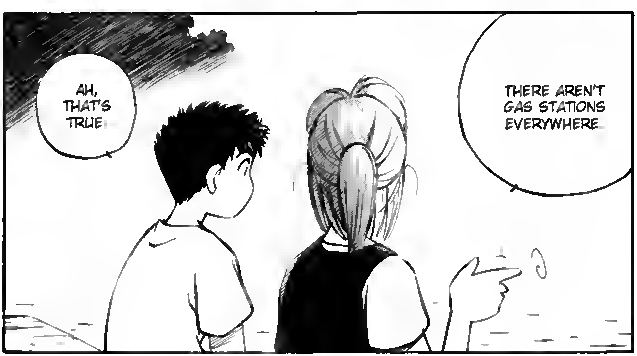



YOU'RE NOT TAKING YOUR SCOOTER?
EH?
YUP.


AH, THAT'S TRUE.
THERE AREN'T GAS STATIONS EVERYWHERE.

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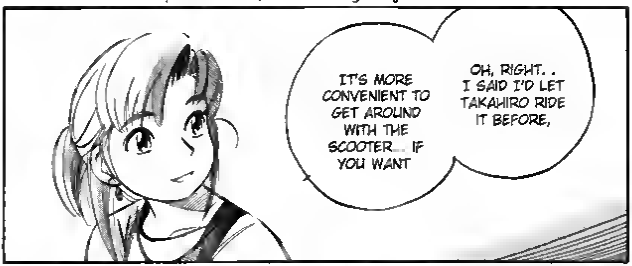

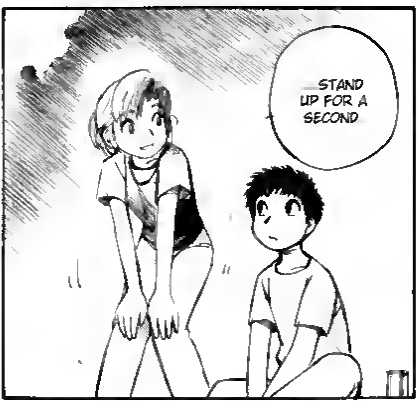

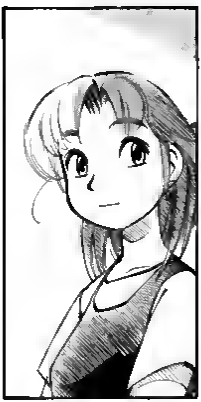

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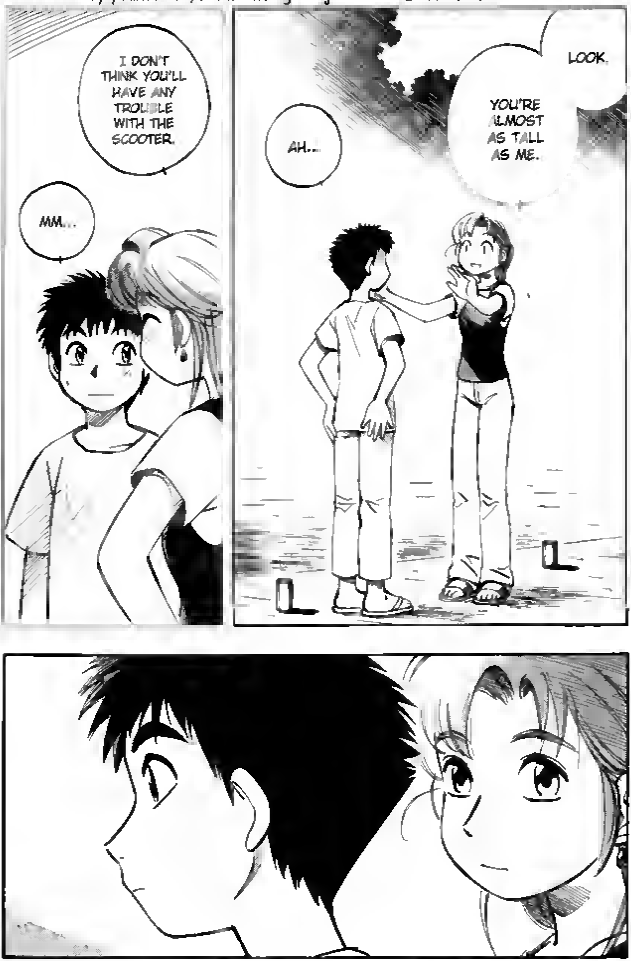
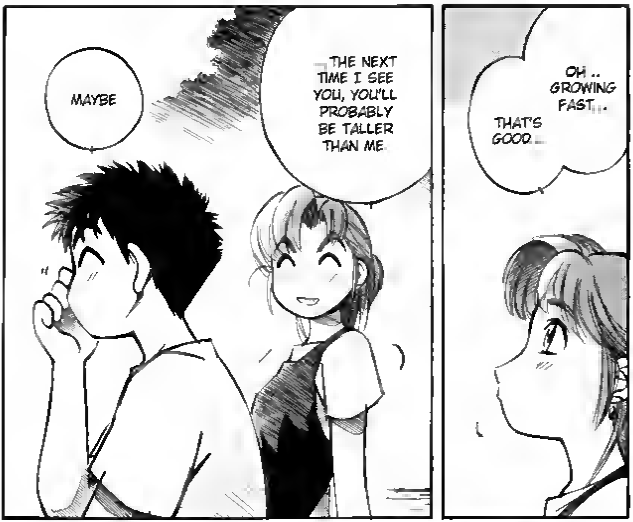
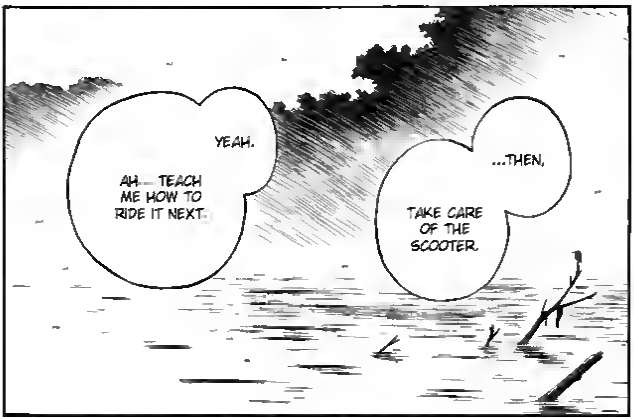
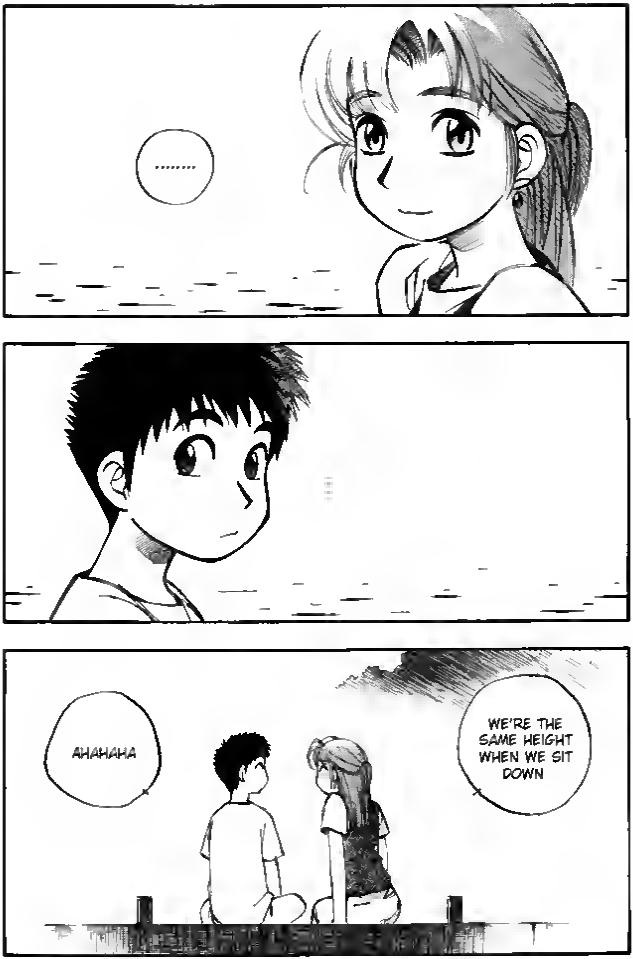


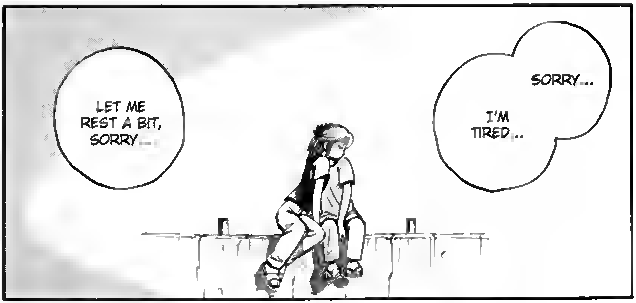
YEAH.
YOU'RE ALREADY THIRTEEN, RIGHT?
I ASKED GRANDPA, AND HE SAID THAT WAS BECAUSE MY BODY'S GROWING REALLY FAST.
MY KNEES EVEN HURT AT NIGHT.
YOU'RE GROWING BIGGER AND BIGGER.
...TO BE HONEST,


OH .. GROWING FAST..
THAT'S GOOD...
...THE NEXT TIME I SEE YOU, YOU'LL PROBABLY BE TALLER THAN ME.
MAYBE

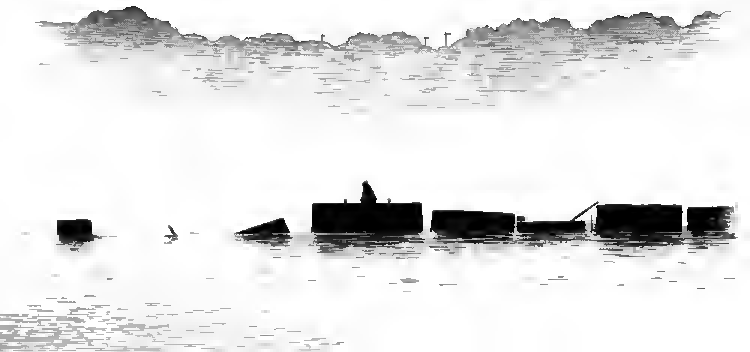

...THEN,
TAKE CARE OF THE SCOOTER.
YEAH.
AH... TEACH ME HOW TO RIDE IT NEXT.


.....
AHAHAHA
WE'RE THE SAME HEIGHT WHEN WE SIT DOWN

.. ЦИ..
НЕУ—?

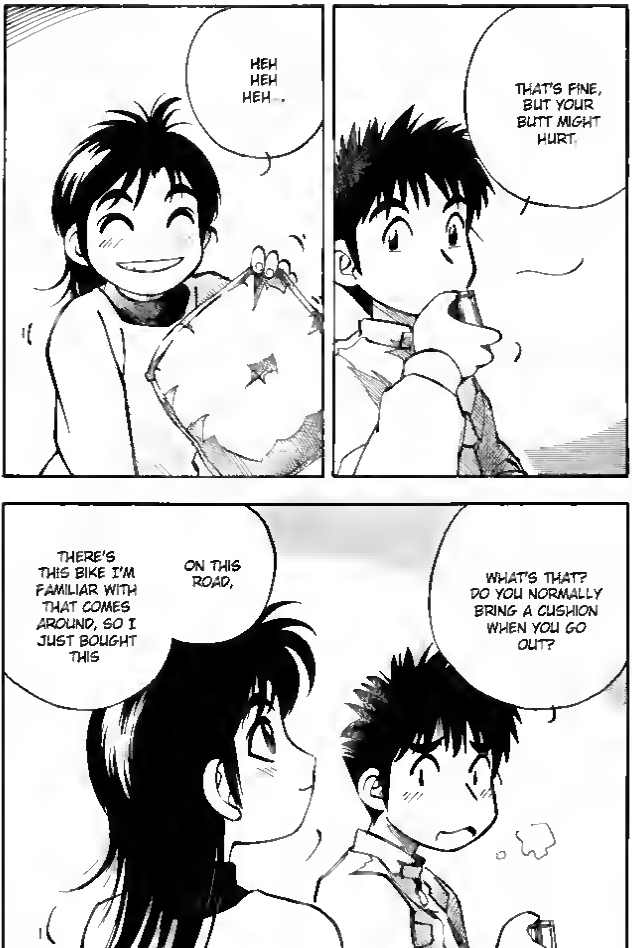

LET ME REST A BIT, SORRY...
SORRY... I'M TIRED...

...HEY



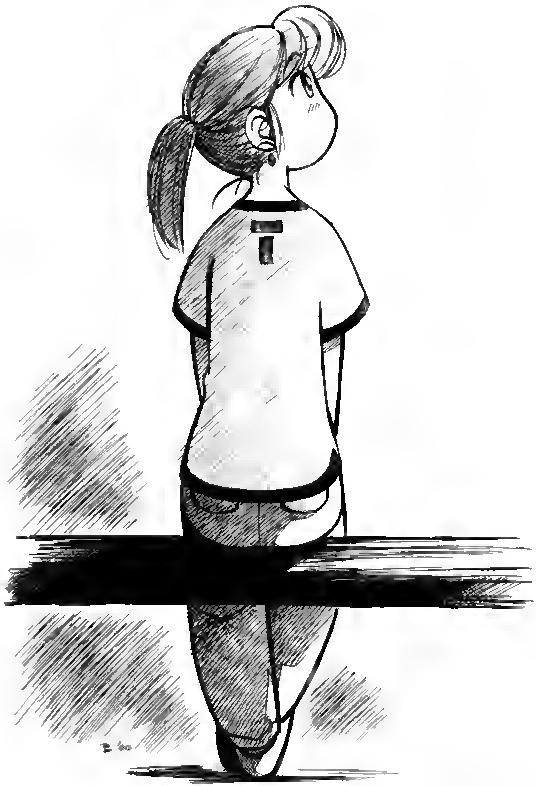
TAKAHIRO!!

HEY!
OH?
YOU WENT SHOPPING?
YUP, IT'S A LITTLE HEAVY I CAN CARRY IT THOUGH!
AH?
WILL YOU HELP ME TAKE IT HOME?


HEH HEH HEH...
THAT'S FINE, BUT YOUR BUTT MIGHT HURT.
THERE'S THIS BIKE I'M FAMILIAR WITH THAT COMES AROUND, SO I JUST BOUGHT THIS
ON THIS ROAD,
WHAT'S THAT? DO YOU NORMALLY BRING A CUSHION WHEN YOU GO OUT?

YUP!
REALLY..
..DO YOU WANT SOME COFFEE?
SURE!

HERE.
WHAT, I GET YOUR LEFT-OVERS?



MISAGO, KAMAS, IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
I think we've met before.
Really?
Ah, but opportunities like these are really hard to find.
That's because we almost never appear in the manga.
Maybe it's because we're not as talkative.
It's not like we have anything to say
Oh! I have stuff I want to say!
Really! I have a lot to say!
You're lying, right?

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ヨコハマ買い出し紀行 7
芦奈野ひとし

講談社

雑誌 55719-10

ISBN4-06-321110-X

C9979 ¥476E (0)

9784063211108

1929979004767

アフタヌーンKC
講談社
定価「本体476円
(税別)

こどものころは
となり町の小学校にさえ
ものすごい文化的人種的ギャップを
感じたもんですが
以前　中国の旅から帰ってきた時
成田からの町並みも日本語も
中国と同じものに感じて
びっくりしたことがあります。
年のこともあるとはいえ
人の頭のそういう雑なフォローぐあいは
なんか好きです。

芦奈野ひとし